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Empire, Identity and the Britannia Colony: Female Settlers' Perspectives on Life in Western Canada

by

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Abstract

An exploration of the roles played by a number of British women who immigrated to western Canada during the early part of the twentieth century where they helped to establish the Britannia colony located on the border of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Also referred to as Barr colonists, these women were part of a large group of Britons belonging to an emigration scheme lead by the Reverends Isaac Barr and George Exton Lloyd, in which the intention was to establish an all-British settlement on the prairies. Various autobiographical narratives written by some of the female colonists serve as primary source materials and provide insight into ways that women functioned as subjects of imperialism to contribute to the development of the Britannia colony and to the creation of the historical narrative that has come to be known about it.

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I am particularly humbled by the generosity of descendants and persons from the Britannia communities who have made many source materials available to me. In this regard, I wish to thank Ivy Popow, the daughter of Elsie Kent (née Nowell) for allowing me to use her mother's journals and photographs, as well as Bud Rendell who also gave his permission to use photographs and to cite information from his family history about Alice and William Rendell. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Franklin Foster for his permission to cite from George Exton Lloyd's memoir, *The Trail of 1903*.

Thank you to Christopher Laurence and Judith Haynes who generously allowed me to use Enid Wheeler's memoir. I would also like to express my gratitude to Tom Rackham for his interest and for his provision of source materials, including several documents related to Isaac Barr's emigration scheme. Thanks also to Pamela Chamberlain for her insight and for taking time to read and comment on the draft manuscript.

Finally, anyone who undertakes a project such as this knows it has a substantial impact on the lives of those at home—particularly during some of the stressful moments that inevitably accompany the work of writing, research and meeting the associated deadlines. In this regard, I am indebted to Darrell for his unfailing support and encouragement.

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Abbreviations

BPSC	Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

Introduction

Apart from knowing I wanted to study life narratives written by members of the Britannia colony, my plans for this thesis were, at the outset, unrelated to gender. My interest in the colony had its beginnings in a family history project that I had begun some years earlier in the company of my grandmother. When she died, she left behind a substantial collection of photos, letters, diaries, and artwork that had been created by her parents, Agnes Wheeler and Stanley Rackham. As I began to study theoretical approaches to the analysis of life narratives in university, I recognized an opportunity to better understand my family's documents by including them in an academic project. My hope was that I could, in the process of completing this thesis, learn something about my own origins, as well as further develop my critical understanding of life writing.

Later I would more succinctly identify that the goal of my project was "to analyze, in the context of twentieth-century imperialism, autobiographical writings by some of the women who lived in the Britannia Colony." The decision to write about gender was a difficult one to make, but one which points out the merits of the project itself. While I had considered writing about women all along, the kinds of documents I'd located by them did not, at first, appeal to me. I initially found their writings to be bland and less substantive than the writings by many of the men and this discovery disappointed me. My earliest impressions of some of these women's documents left me frustrated and, on one occasion, prompted me to tell Professor Devereux, my graduate supervisor, that I felt "there was really nothing at all to say about these women."

Yet, the lack of emphasis narrators of the Britannia story have tended to place on the colony's women did always bother me, particularly because of the fact that within my

own family, finding any information about my female relatives has been terribly difficult. Indeed, the bulk of sources in my family's collection turn out to have been composed by Rackham, with only a fraction of those narratives belonging to Agnes Wheeler. This type of trend would prove persistent. Many times throughout the course of my research, I would ask individuals from the Britannia communities about specific women, only to have the conversations steered towards men. Perhaps the most pronounced example I can provide is my attempt to learn about Laura Sisley. Well remembered by residents in the district of Lashburn, Saskatchewan, the unmarried Sisley arranged to accompany twelve orphaned boys to Canada where she paid all of their associated expenses, including homestead fees. She is said to have depleted her financial resources caring for the orphans and, according to the popular version of events, she spent her final years doing housekeeping work for some of the same young men she established on homesteads.[1] Despite her very fascinating life, people from her community with whom I spoke tended to direct the conversations as much towards the "boys"—as they have continued to be called—as to Sisley herself.

I raise this observation not to criticize—indeed, I have the utmost gratitude to all who shared stories—but to reinforce the importance of the kind of work which I have begun on the Britannia colony. Although I was unconscious of it, the belief that these women were of a somewhat secondary status was also mine at one point. My main objective has been to remind my readers—and myself—that Britannia women contributed in very important ways to the development of the colony, and to the creation of its historical narrative.

Britannia women wrote autobiographical documents that demonstrate their desire for social change; for example, as British subjects, women like Alice Rendell, Mary Hiemstra, and Martha Topott demonstrate that the empire was accountable to them, as much as they were accountable to it. These women write cleverly using various slippages to signify their awareness of themselves as persons in a social system where men had public power and where women who stepped outside convention would have been harshly criticized. This conservative approach is also apparent in the diaries by Britannia women, where rather than record their personal feelings about settler life, the diarists talk about labour. However, the ways that they define the scope of that labour to include their participation in the development of domestic, community, and social spaces comes to be important because connections can be made to suggest the diarists see themselves as doers of imperial work. Moreover, it suggests that the women do that work in ways that enable them to improve their living conditions. Ultimately, a review of short memoirs demonstrates that, while the women find ways to move outside some of the constraining values that the homeland and Canada imposes on them, they remain devoted to their belief that Britain was supreme. This tone suggests that these women did attempt to implant imperial values in Canada and that they understood that objective to be worthwhile.

Despite the fact that they write from positions of marginality, I will argue that Britannia women revise the existing patriarchal models to tell a story that is about them as much as it is about male counterparts. It is most important to understand that Britannia women do not merely repeat patterns to write themselves into an existing story, but that they contribute to the creation of those narrative patterns in the first place. I contend that,

from within the domestic sphere, Britannia women play a major role in deciding how their group's history comes to be told. This claim is substantiated through the introduction of a significant letter addressed to the editor of the *Lloydminster Times* about the memoirs belonging to one of the colony's founders, the Reverend George Exton Lloyd. Gladys M. Malaher, the author of this letter—and Marion and the Reverend Lloyd's daughter—points out that her father did not complete his memoirs prior to his death. She writes, "the Bishop was never able to correct [his memoir] before he left us," and adds, "Mrs. Lloyd and I will check the proofs over and let you have them as soon as possible after Christmas" (n.d.).[2] While the scope of the women's edits is not known, it is evident they had significant control over what would become the published version of these reminiscences. This point is particularly significant since, as researcher Lynne Bowen points out, the Reverend Lloyd's "memoirs shaped the recollections of many of the colonists" (71). *The Trail of 1903* became part of the public record under his authorship; however, as the letter to the editor suggests, the Lloyd women also play a significant role in the shaping of the memoirs that were to be accepted by many as a reliable version of events.

Thus a survey of life writing by Britannia women indicates that they are key participants in the development of their community and in the development of the narrative that comes to exist in relation to that community. Whether written during the earliest years of the colony or at later points, the life narratives by Britannia women tend to be reserved reflecting the writers' awareness of certain constraints. Diaries and letters written in the first years reveal how these women successfully create support networks for themselves to achieve increased personal autonomy. Over time, an evolution in the

tone of the discourse occurs as the women achieve greater independence. The transition is apparent in memoirs which, although still reserved, come to reveal more openness in discussions of women's issues and a more confident use of the autobiographical I. I argue that such a transition is identifiable in even the most reserved of these narratives, primarily through the memoirists' more forceful depictions of women at work.

As I will demonstrate, the evolution of the female voice suggests that Britannia women were key participants in the development of a discourse about the Britannia colony and about Canadian pioneer women in general. At the same time, Britannia women were female imperialists who capably (re)constructed their particular ideological framework to develop what they felt to be a positive rhetoric about women. The presence of the new rhetoric suggests that Britannia women found greater autonomy in Canada, while ultimately remaining committed to, and reinforcing, imperial politics that sought to make Canada into an extension of the British Empire. Indeed, Britannia women also defend British customs and British ethnicity, and do so with decisive voices. Thus Katie Pickles' argument that "imperial feminism has much in common with female imperialism" is accurate (*Old and New* 278). Britannia women were interested in reshaping imperial discourse to represent themselves more forcefully and with a greater sense of pride in their accomplishments. Apart from that project, they remained committed the homeland's goal of colonizing Canada on behalf of the British.

Chapter One

"Barr has Turned out Either a Complete Failure or Else a Complete Fraud." The Ambiguous Background History of the Britannia Colony [3]

Prior to proceeding to fuller discussions about how Britannia women contribute to the development of their community and the narrative that springs up about that community, it is necessary to provide further information about the emigration scheme and events leading up to the arrival of this group in Western Canada. It was in 1903 that a party of approximately two thousand British colonists came to Canada under the leadership of Reverend Isaac Montgomery Barr. This group left Liverpool on March 31 aboard a ship called the *S.S. Lake Manitoba* to arrive in the Saint John harbour on April 10. From this point forward, the group traveled by the Canadian Pacific Railway to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Here the railway tracks came to an abrupt halt to mark the commencement of the final part of the journey to the settlement site: a two-hundred-mile trek with ox and wagon across the prairie.

Barr's landsite—the region that would come to be known as Lloydminster—was the main destination, although many colonists also opted to select homesteads in districts encountered along the trek. Others found themselves without sufficient funds and had to obtain employment prior to staking homesteads. A few disillusioned individuals even returned to England. The entire journey was a difficult and uncomfortable one, punctuated by frequent disagreements and misunderstandings that involved Barr. The journey to the settlement did not happen in the orderly way that Barr had promised, and the result was widespread anger on the part of the colonists.

Verification of personal information about Barr's life is difficult. While a wealth of official documentation exists in the form of letters to government officials, personal documents authored by Barr remain scarce. Barr's biographer, Helen Evans Reid, provides a detailed—and sympathetic—depiction of her subject.[4] Reid writes that Barr was born in 1847 in Halton County, Ontario. During a visit to Ireland an uncle fostered in Barr the belief that the latter "had a part to play in the great tide of British expansion, and that he too would be an empire builder" (Reid 19). After he returned from Ireland to Canada, Barr studied theology at Huron College. Although Barr would go on to become a charismatic preacher, his relationship with church leaders was characterized by disputes over salary and job expectations. The most serious of Barr's transgressions took place when a fellow clergyman claimed that Barr "pronounced the doctrine of the fall of man 'revolting' and untrue" (Reid 27). Following such accusations, Barr could not secure a church position in Canada, so he went to the United States where he preached for a number of years.

Barr remained there until 1901, when he decided to participate in imperial work in South Africa. The plans for South Africa did not materialize. Instead, Barr went to England where he initiated discussions with W.T.R. Preston, a representative of Canada's Department of the Interior who, under the leadership of the Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, was responsible for facilitating British immigration to Canada. "The ideal immigrant, according to Sifton's criteria, would have been a farmer from Scotland or the North of England" but, as Bowen explains, "few British farmers" had shown interest in settling in western Canada (9). Desperate to populate regions in western Canada, Doug Owram explains that Sifton began to pay "new attention to potential immigrants in

southern and eastern Europe" (224). Despite the fact that non-British settlers were arriving in Canada, Kathryn Ivany explains that Anglo-Canadians remained optimistic that there were sufficient numbers of British settlers to ensure that "British institutions and values…would be universally understood and accepted" by non-British immigrants (16). When this outcome did not materialize, ethnocentric Anglo-Canadians feared that non-British immigrants, with their own "culturally distinct ways of behaving…would drag down Canadian social values" (Ivany 17-18). Barr proposed to assist with this problem when he approached Preston with an offer to "gather together twenty-five [British] families who were familiar with agriculture and help them to emigrate" (Bowen 9).

Around the time that Barr began his work in England, the Reverend George Exton Lloyd had been hired by the Colonial and Continental Church Society–an organization Bowen describes as "the most rigorously evangelical of the several missionary arms of the Church of England [in which it was his role] to arrange for the ministrations of the Church of England to be available to colonists in their new homes" (7). According to Guy Lyle, the principal compiler of the University of Alberta's Barr Colonist archive collection, Lloyd was born in London in 1861 and "attended St. John's College [where] he showed a strong interest in divinity studies and military training" (Lyle 8). At age twenty, Lloyd moved to Canada where he attended Toronto's Wycliffe Theological College, but "Lloyd's studies were interrupted by enlistment in the Queen's Own Regiment, Toronto" (Lyle 8). During his military service, "[Lloyd] served with the forces which met Chief Poundmaker at Cut Knife Creek, was severely wounded, and awarded a metal for outstanding bravery" (Lyle 8). These events turned out to be somewhat

fortuitous for Lloyd who, by virtue of his military career, found himself in the perfect position to become what British society esteemed as the ideal religious leader. As Myra Rutherdale notes, most people felt that the model preacher "was a curious amalgam of the…masculine outdoorsman combined with the evangelical visiting clergy" (9). Rutherdale further explains that "there were many models for this type of manhood, found especially in popular boys' literature from the mid-Victorian era through to the early twentieth century" (9). Thus Lloyd's feats in battle became "the stuff of legend" enabling him to elicit widespread support when he called the British people to populate western Canada (Bowen 7). According to Bowen, Lloyd fit the profile of a "genuine hero who now set out to spread the word all over the British Isles about the opportunities available on the Canadian prairies" (7). Lloyd's commitment to Empire had prompted him to write a circular letter dated September 23, 1902, in which he chastises British people for their failure to populate "the magnificent area of wheat land in Western Canada [to keep it] thoroughly British." In this letter Lloyd expresses his regret "to see … a fine British province being settled so largely by Americans and foreigners" and backs his summons with an offer: "If my twenty years of experience in Canadian life can throw any light upon the step other people may now be contemplating, I will gladly do what I can to help them by answering any questions to the best of my ability, provided those who ask them will enclose a stamped and addressed envelope to my private address." As Lloyd would later recount in his memoirs, his offer was met with overwhelming enthusiasm by hundreds of respondents.

Thus Barr's arrival was timely for Lloyd who found himself without sufficient resources to answer the huge volume of letters that he received in response to his

editorial. According to Lloyd's memoir titled *The Trail of 1903,* Barr took over responsibility for that task, promising to answer those letters with a "pamphlet he was preparing about the party forming for Saskatchewan" (3).[5] While the exact circumstances under which Barr and Lloyd's first meeting takes place are difficult to confirm, Lloyd indicates that, initially, he "felt quite satisfied that [Barr] was the man to take up the formation of a party for Western Canada" (3). From this point, it seems that Barr maintained primary responsibility for negotiations with Canadian officials, including travel to Canada to select grant lands, while, according to one of Barr's pamphlets, Lloyd "had charge of the movement" from the British-based office in Barr's absence (14).[6] As plans continued to unfold, Lloyd and others expressed concern for the fact that no clergyman was in the vicinity of the settlement site. Although Lloyd appears not to have originally intended to go to Canada, Barr states in his Christmas pamphlet that he is "glad to announce that Mr. Lloyd has finally decided to accompany the party to Canada…[as] the Incumbent of the Church of England missions or parishes in the settlement" (14).[7] In this way, Lloyd came to be appointed as the colony's religious leader.

There exists a substantial amount of correspondence outlining negotiations between Barr and various members of Canada's Department of the Interior. While a detailed chronology of these transactions remains outside the scope of this project, the plan that Barr and Department officials orchestrated appears to have lacked continuity from the outset. Eric Holmgren summarizes:

> On the one side was the Canadian Government and its official agent Preston, who in his way was determined to do all he could for the peopling of Canada with British immigrants. On the other side was Barr, restless,

> unpredictable, volatile, with an agile pen and tongue and determined to implement his master plan of a communal settlement on the Western Prairies. In his readiness to pursue his plans to the utmost, Barr revealed a way of capitalizing on verbal promises from Preston and others (even though these may have not been very firm) and of committing these men in print .... So it was that at the end of September, 1902, matters were in a fluid state. Barr and Lloyd were answering letters and making plans. (34-35)

Throughout the various stages of preparation, Barr is optimistic, if not intentionally vague when he describes the settlement site to the prospective colonists; for example, in his September 1902 pamphlet, he is elusive about the winter in western Canada, writing that the climate is "conducive to vigorous health, notwithstanding occasional extremes of heat and cold" (14). In his Christmas pamphlet he is similarly ambiguous about the weather, writing that "the climate of North-West Canada is a most invigorating and enjoyable one [and] it is sometimes very cold" (6). A few lines later, Barr states that the "climate in the district is highly favoured...[with] extremes of heat or cold of rare occurrences" (6). Whether produced in Canada or Britain, rhetoric of this kind was not atypical of most settlement literature. R.G. Moyles and Doug Owram suggest that "the Canadian government, the railways, and land companies were more interested in selling the region than in giving an accurate picture of the conditions" (122). The result was an onslaught of immigration propaganda that underemphasized the hardships associated with life in western Canada. Barr's circular letters and pamphlets were not unique in this regard.

Although many colonists would cite Barr's pamphlets as evidence that he misrepresented Canada to them, one of the primary causes of dissatisfaction with him had to do with the fees that he charged for his services. Clive Tallant explains that the colonists paid Barr for "homestead entry fees, absentee entry fees, shares in stores and transportation syndicates, hospitalization, insurance, and the like" (41). When Barr failed to deliver most of these promises, the colonists believed he was guilty of premeditated dishonesty. Accusations that Barr was a profiteer began even aboard the *S.S. Lake Manitoba*. In a letter to his mother, Stanley Rackham, a young colonist, describes some of the upheaval that took place during the first stages of the journey:

> There have been one or two scenes with him on board—once when Barr was explaining things to a large crowd on deck, a man asked him why a man in Canada who wished to join the colony had to pay 1 pound [?] and his homestead fee—and Barr at once replied that as he got no pay for organizing the colony, except through the commission on the boat fares– he had to charge these people something or he would get nothing out of them at all. The man then said something about liking to see Barr's balance sheet and Barr flared up at once and said he wouldn't have the man in the colony at all. (April 5, 1903)

Disagreements of a similar nature are common throughout narratives by Britannia colonists, and restated by later researchers. Upon their arrival in Saint John, many colonists could not locate needed food and supplies. Bowen explains that "the passengers were addressed by Mr. Barr, who told them that, in preparation for the train journey ahead, he had arranged to have eight thousand loaves of bread baked on board the ship

and would sell them at cost the next day" (66). Bowen further notes that "considering the demand that would have been placed on the bakeries of that city if 1, 960 people had required bread all at once,…Barr's provision of bread made sense" (66-67). If Lloyd's memoir is to be believed, the colonists did not hold this point of view:

> Mr. Barr bought up all the flour that was left in the ship and got the bakers to bake it into loaves, to be sold to the settlers just before they began the journey on the trains. That might have been a very helpful move, one we should have remembered with thanks. But the price was put at 10 cents a loaf. One of the ship's officers said that was not the right price because we could get all we wanted at five cents when we landed in St. John. I went down to see Mr. Barr and told him he was upsetting the unity of the party in order to make a miserable five cents profit. After awhile he said, 'oh well, let them have it at five cents.' But it was too late. Everybody was talking about it and suggesting that I.M. Barr was 'on the make.' (11)

Bowen points out that "[Barr's] profit, if he sold every loaf and did not have to pay the ship for baking a special order, would have been only a few dollars, hardly enough to make it financially worth his while" (67). The colonists, however, would insist that Barr had been motivated by greed. Bowen notes how stories of this nature—including the story about the bread—were an accepted truth among the colonists. "In the years that followed" states Bowen, "[Barr's] detractors would add 'the bread incident' to his list of crimes" (67). Valid or not, these stories circulated widely amongst the colonists.

The colonists' mistrust of Barr grew as, one by one, the leader's promises failed to materialize. Built to accommodate only a few hundred passengers, the *S.S. Lake*

Manitoba could not comfortably support the almost two thousand passengers who boarded in Liverpool. Crowded conditions, lost and damaged luggage and poor food fostered the colonists' dissatisfaction with Barr who, in his Christmas pamphlet, had guaranteed his charges that they would travel aboard "a fine steamer…of sufficient capacity" (9). In this same publication, Barr had also assured the colonists that once "at Saint John the party [would] step from the steamer on to the train…[without] delay" (10). The stay in Saint John, however, was prolonged due to a number of mishaps, including an unplanned period of quarantine enforced when "a doctor came on board to check that everyone had been vaccinated against small-pox" (Bowen 67). Barr's pamphlet had also promised that, once in Saskatoon, adequate numbers of "horses, wagons, harness, and provisions [would be available] for the journey" to the settlement site (12-13). Barr further assured the colonists that Saskatoon had many "shops of all kinds, and all the great outfitting firms of the North-West have agencies and supply depots" (13). While Saskatoon did have a number of merchants, the quantity of available supplies was not adequate to meet the great demand brought about by the high numbers of colonists. Moreover, some merchants took advantage of the increased demand for their services, causing Rackham to complain that he "[felt] the disadvantage of traveling in such numbers–namely high prices" (April 27, 1903 Letter to mother). The economic turnover generated by the Barr party was so extensive that Bruce Peel and Eric Knowles refer to it as "the great impetus to [Saskatoon's] [economic] development" (40). Although lucrative for residents in Saskatoon, these high costs and supply shortages inflamed the already angry colonists.

Barr had also underrepresented the difficulties associated with cross-country travel when he promised in his Christmas pamphlet that the road between Saskatoon and the homestead sites—at least as far as Battleford—would be "excellent, all streams bridged and bad spots turnpiked and graded" (12). In reality, a road was almost non-existent, and the journals and letters written by the colonists who took part in this portion of the journey confirm difficulties such as injured livestock and wagons stuck in sloughs. Bowen notes that "it took most of the settlers two days just to go the first thirty miles [as] the trail had become a quagmire" (116). It was at the settlement site, however, that events culminated when some colonists expressed dissatisfaction with the land. Tallant summarizes:

> There was great confusion over making homestead entries. Some colonists accepted their allotments from Barr, while others after looking over the allotments refused them and entered elsewhere in the reservation. The headquarters camp was soon the scene of angry demonstrations by colonists who felt that Barr had not lived up to his bargain. To pacify some of the more aggressive settlers, Barr issued cheques to reimburse them for money they had paid him for shares in the syndicates. After a few days at the settlement, Barr returned to Battleford which he reached on May 15. (43-44)

The exact circumstances under which Barr decided to return to Battleford were widely speculated on by many of the colonists. On May 25, 1903, Rackham told his father that "about a week ago, [Barr] more or less did a break to Battleford and said he wouldn't return without an escort of mounted police." Rackham continues: "This looks as if he

had been badly threatened, but … I don't think he has been by the colonists—though feelings have been very high about the high price of food here and other things."

Details about the events associated with Barr's removal as leader are still largely unconfirmed. Through the course of her research, for example, Bowen encountered many versions of this event. As Bowen explains, stories about Barr's departure are exaggerated ones that "usually involved midnight rides and hurtling horses" (136). The researcher further acknowledges that such stories are "hard to confirm and harder still to fit into the sequence of events" (136).[8] The general consensus is that, after Barr's return to Battleford, "a meeting of the colonists...was called, at which a resolution was passed unanimously...to interview Barr and to have an agreement drawn up authorizing Lloyd to assume the leadership with a provisional committee of twelve members elected by the colonists" (Tallant 43-44). At some point, Barr signed over all interests in the colony to this committee and is said to have left Canada "to participate in a new—and unsuccessful—settlement scheme" in Australia (Bowen 207). Reverend Lloyd and his family remained in Lloydminster until 1905. Lloyd's "career culminated in his consecration as Bishop of Saskatchewan in 1922 [and] he [remained committed]...to keeping Canada for the British" (Bowen 207).

Barr's motives also are a source of great controversy. Rackham speaks of his confusion and disappointment in a letter to his father, writing that "Barr has turned out either a complete failure or else a complete fraud. I still hope the former but am afraid it is the latter" (May 25, 1903). Later researchers are also divided in their opinions. Pierre Berton is critical and calls Barr a "charlatan" (103). Others, such as Reid and Bowen are sympathetic to Barr and assign blame for the difficulties more equitably. Certainly, some

responsibility lay with members of Canada's Department of the Interior who, in their enthusiasm to entice settlers, "tended to offer deceptively 'glowing accounts' of life and work in Canada, to make the emigration effort seem easy" (Moyles and Owram 123). Thus the colonists' own failure to critically analyze imperial rhetoric that encouraged them to expand the empire is also a factor. Reid makes this argument, stating that the colonists' "imaginations too had been captured by the imperial dream: the transplantation of a bit of Britain, total and intact, to Western Canada" (141). It does seem that many of the settlers read Barr's settlement literature selectively. However vague, Barr did caution readers of his Christmas pamphlet that "there [would be] difficulties and drawbacks to be encountered" (23). As Bowen reports, however, "when things started to go wrong, the colonists, the newspapers, and the government of Canada looked for a scapegoat and found him easily in Isaac Barr" (208). Apart from Barr's obvious incompetence, it is clear that there are a number of complex reasons that he failed as a leader.

To a lesser degree, the Reverend Lloyd has also been held accountable. On August 5, 1903, farming instructors Dale and Snow reported that "a small body of the previous leaders of the Colony with Rev. C.E. Lloyde [sic] at its head, have been responsible for some of the non-progressiveness of the people. They insist on maintaining exclusive control of the mercantile interests of the Colonists and… through their lack of experience and mismanagement they cause the people serious losses" (n.pag.). Bowen also acknowledges how Lloyd's business skills fell under scrutiny when she quotes a "correspondent from the colony writing to the *Saskatchewan Herald* [who stated that]…'the people now think they jumped from the pan into the fire when they threw over Rev. Barr for Rev. Lloyd'" (207). If Barr is guilty of unsound leadership

practices, it should be recalled that Lloyd also had promoted the colony based on his "twenty years of experience in Canadian life" (Circular letter, September 23, 1902). In reality, Lloyd had little direct experience in western Canada and little, if any, experience as the leader of a settlement scheme. Yet, in his December 1902 circular letter, Lloyd publicly endorses the Barr scheme: "I have carefully gone into this plan in consultation with the Canadian Government...and I am satisfied it is the very thing I want to see carried out." Hence, it has been acknowledged that some responsibility for the debacle belonged to Lloyd who promoted British expansion into that region without due consideration.

From this overview it is possible to understand how stories told about the Britannia colony come to focus on the founding fathers and, by extension, on colonists like Rackham who devoted space in their letters and diaries to record their observations. Women, of course, also wrote about these events, but it bears mentioning that there were far fewer women than men in the primary party of colonists. Of the approximately two thousand British immigrants who traveled with Barr in 1903, Bowen estimates that "the number of single women … was less than a hundred … [and approximately] two hundred married women" (45). It was projects like the Barr scheme that made it possible, as well as necessary, for women to join in expansionist missions. As occupants of the domestic sphere, however, they wrote from a different vantage point and this reality has meant that Britannia women have not always received equitable representation.

To address this problem, I make several assumptions. First, I take as a given that a complex interrelationship exists between Britannia colonist women's and men's autobiographies. Although the focus is an analysis of Britannia women's

autobiographical narratives, it will still be necessary, at times, to reference works written by Britannia men. This assertion is substantiated by the work of Joan Scott, who argues that the interrelationship between women and men must be acknowledged and encourages exploration into ways that "the subjective and collective meanings of women and men as categories of identity have been constructed" (6). Britannia women's imperial work—the work of making homes—had a direct impact on men who shared that space. Similarly, men's roles had an impact on women. Under imperialism the acquisition of land and material wealth was a man's primary responsibility. In his September pamphlet, Barr warns the prospective settlers that, until farms are established, men will need to "hire out...leaving, if married, wives and children for some weeks on the homestead" (13). Hence, wives could either be left at home in Britain while men worked to establish financial stability in the colony, or they could be left alone on homesteads for extended periods of time while their husbands sought work. In instances where the latter was the case, women had to do all the manual labour as well as care for the home and children. Thus homesteading was very much a joint venture between men and women and, by extension, their narratives are interconnected and need to be discussed together.

Next, despite the fact that the settlement is commonly referred to as the Barr colony, the signifier I have chosen to use is Britannia colony. As Bowen points out, widespread dissatisfaction with Barr caused the new leadership committee to "attempt to expunge his name from any association with the colony [meaning that]...the twenty townships near headquarters were to be called 'the Britannia Colony'" (154). While the colonists would eventually show their gratitude to Lloyd by naming the primary town Lloydminster, Britannia is, nonetheless, the title that best encompasses all of the colonists

associated with in this settlement scheme, and the one that will be used in this project, unless a quotation dictates otherwise.[9]

Reconsideration of the colony's title is also important because it helps to redirect the focus that is usually placed on the founding fathers, enabling a re-evaluation of the timeframe that tends to be applied to the standard retelling of Britannia colony's history. As stated, the events most focused on in narratives about the colony tend to be those that involve Barr and Lloyd and members of the primary group, with some attention paid to events in the colonies during the first months or year. Adherence to this timeframe does not allow for the comprehensive inclusion of women's autobiographies because, as Anne McClintock argues, it fails to take into account the fact that "women and men did not experience imperialism in the same way" (6). In addition to the fact that women inhabited the domestic sphere, the time from which these women began their lives in the colony also differs. Ivany calculates that an appropriate scope for a study of the Britannia colony would extend from 1903 to as late as 1928 since "this timeframe encompasses the experiences of the first generation of the colonists" (7). Ivany's research focuses on an analysis of the colonists as members of an ethnic community, but her consideration of the generational component is also relevant to a study of women where such an approach enables proper consideration of the fact that Britannia colonist women and men did not share an androgynous experience of settler life. Some of the females who would write about life in the colony were young children in 1903. They might not have been particularly aware of events related to Barr, but they nevertheless grew into womanhood while living in that community. Indeed, many women who experienced life there did not come to Canada with Barr's primary group at all. Some did—and examples of such

women will be included in this project—but many British women who were a part of the Britannia colony came to Canada with groups of other British settlers. Many wives, sisters, daughters, mothers, or aunts came to join male family members after the homesteads were better established. Sometimes it was years after the initial party's arrival that these women arrived. Unfortunately, most overviews stop short of including women who came to the colony after the primary party. My research includes narratives by women who arrived in the colony in the months or years after the Britannia colony was first founded by Barr's initial group.

Clarification about what is meant by the terms *life narrative, life writing,* or *autobiography* as they occur in this project is also required. Britannia women's words are found in diaries, letters, oral histories, and memoirs in either private collections or catalogued discreetly in various repositories throughout western Canada. In their comprehensive overview of critical approaches applied to the study of autobiography, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson note that such forms have often been excluded from "a canon of great books of autobiography" (*Reading Autobiography* 114). Indeed, the Britannia colony has its own canon of works comprised primarily of autobiographical narratives written by male authors. James Hanna McCormick, Harry Pick, Paul Hordern, and Ivan Crossley all published memoirs about their experiences in the Britannia colony. A series of oral histories is housed in the Saskatchewan Archives, all from Britannia men.[10] Reverend Lloyd's memoir is another popular autobiographical document that has recently been republished. Even unpublished works by men—such as diaries—have tended to end up in public repositories more often. Copies of Stanley Rackham's diary, for example, are readily available in at least two Canadian archives. His diary is cited by

researchers including Bowen and Berton, thereby contributing to the production of published overviews about the colony. Diaries by Robert Holtby and James Hanna McCormick are two more examples of source materials readily cited by these researchers.

Women's narratives, by contrast, have emerged in published forms less often. With the exception of works by Alice Rendell and Mary Hiemstra—both of whom will be discussed— the bulk of women's narratives are found inside community heritage volumes, newspapers, or magazines intended for circulation primarily within the districts from which they originate. Others are written at the request of family members to record familial accomplishments. This statement reinforces the similarity between autobiography and empire. In both realms, men have tended to occupy public roles while women did their work in the privacy of the home.

Fortunately, scholarship has evolved and now reconsiders the kinds of documents that are appropriately classified as autobiography. Julie Rak makes this point in her work with Doukhobor autobiography, where she confirms that it is necessary to "adjust ideas about what constitutes autobiographical discourse, and to look beyond the constraints of mainstream publishing" (*Negotiated Memory* xii). The same approach is required to select sources for a study of the Britannia colony where many of the autobiographical texts by those women are not published accounts. With a few exceptions, the diaries, letters, and memoirs used in this project have been written either for use in the family unit or for specific audiences within the Britannia colonist community.

Theoretical approaches used to study autobiography have not commonly been applied to a study of any of the source material related to the colony and, arguably, would

be of tremendous use to a study of Britannia narratives by both women and men. As a means to study Britannia women's narratives, such theories are particularly vital because they help to decipher the silences and gaps that seem to pervade this particular body of work. Britannia women are, on the whole, conservative in their approaches to writing and this persistent reticence has pre-empted their full inclusion in some more contemporary retellings of this group's story. Bowen, for example, articulates her frustration as she attempts to understand why women from the Britannia colony write as they do:

> These hard-working women were portrayed as cheerful and compliant. It was a picture painted by men and reinforced by the reluctance of most women to disagree even in their diaries, which make curiously flat reading. There is a lack of emotion demonstrated and the cheery acceptance of their lot does not ring true. (175)

To analyze the silences and gaps found in these narratives requires particular kinds of analytical approaches. The methods used by literary critics who study women's autobiography focus on contextual factors such as the author's relationship to audience and her position in the patriarchy. Women's uses of pronouns like "I" and "we," their depictions of mother-daughter relationships, and ways that women use autobiography to signify their membership in a community are a few of the ways that critical theories about life writing will be used in this project.

Recent critical scholarship exploring the interrelationship between women and imperialism tends most often to focus on British women's roles in regions such as Australia, Africa, and South Asia. By focusing on gender and imperialism in western Canada, particularly during the early part of the twentieth century, this study fills a major

gap in the critical discourse about imperialism. This point is of particular importance since, as James Hammerton points out in an informative essay titled "Gender and Migration," "the Canadian migration experience often diverged sharply from the antipodean" (170). According to Hammerton, inadequate attention has been paid to migration schemes in western Canada as opposed to other regions; an imbalance that is "due to the acclaimed literary output of the Strickland sisters…who settled in Upper Canada during the 1830's and 1840's" (170). While Hammerton suggests that more recent research into "colonial British Columbia provides an illuminating corrective" to this problem, the prairies have continued to be overlooked (171). An exploration into the interrelationship between gender and imperialism and ways that Britannia women write autobiographically is a productive means by which to begin to meaningfully include regions of western Canada—specifically Saskatchewan and Alberta—in critical discussions about imperialism.

A broader exploration of narratives written by the Britannia women is particularly vital to the success of such discussions. The current narrative that exists about this group must evolve into one that reconsiders women's contributions to the development of the colony including how they shape the associated discourse. For example, much of the stated history of settler women dwells on their difficulties. Acknowledgement of Britannia women's difficulties will be given due consideration in this project. However, this theme will be expanded upon, and explored for its relevance to ways this particular group of women enact their roles as subjects of empire. An acknowledgement of the importance of such work is made by Robert Johnson who argues that studies about gender and imperialism must do more than cast women as victims: "instead of only

looking at the impact on women, there is still the need to show what women did and how it was done" (130). The life narratives written by Britannia colonist women are useful in this regard.

Given that Britannia colonists wrote at different points in time, there is a remarkable opportunity to explore a cross-section of autobiographical documents that reflect Britannia women's transitions from imperial subjects to Canadian ones—a transition from a historical period when women had few political rights to one where women gained considerably more power. Consider that when these women arrived in Canada, it was, from a legal perspective, extremely difficult for them to achieve economic security through land ownership. By 1915, however, legislation had been written to stop husbands from "selling, mortgaging, transferring, or bequesting the family home or the land on which it stood without the wife's written consent" (Champ n.pag.). Another reform that women earned was the *Devolution of Estates Act* in 1919 which "provided that even in circumstances where a husband had prepared a will, a wife was entitled to a claim on a portion of his property" (Champ n. pag.). While none of the Britannia women's narratives in this study reveals that they were among those who initiated such reforms, Britannia women were arriving in Canada just at the time that those improvements, and others, such as the right to vote, were taking shape. A comparison of Alice Rendell's letters written as early as 1903 to memoirs prepared by other Britannia women in later years provides much insight into the milieu that Britannia women found themselves in upon their arrival in Canada. The ultra-conservative language used to write diaries dating back to the early years in the colony is different in tone from the memoirs that are written a number of years later. Of particular interest is

the way that Britannia women's voices evolve over time from cautious to more confident ones to describe their work as model imperialist women.

Chapter Two

"We Managed Very Well, but the Living was Pretty Poor." Veiled Meanings in Britannia Women's Life Writing[11]

In the introduction, I point out that Britannia women have often been assumed to be of secondary importance to men, and that this attitude towards them is reflected in narratives written by, and about, the colonists. It is difficult not to become preoccupied with the inequity that this representation produces, particularly since these women tend to write in cautious voices. That the tone and content across Britannia women's narratives often serves to reinforce this depiction of themselves as secondary participants makes it tempting to argue that as subjects of imperialism—a system dominated by men—they are suppressed and unable to speak. A more productive approach is to consider how this particular group of women devised ways of speaking—and writing—to optimize the scope of their power and to survive in an unknown country that presented them with numerous risks and challenges. Thus, by exploring a number of slippages found in some of these women's narratives, I argue that Britannia women do use their life narratives to record their desires for social change.

The present chapter considers life narratives that belong to three Britannia women. Alice Rendell's circular letters were composed between April, 1903, and November, 1905, and date back to the earliest days of the colony.[12] Rendell provides readers with a version of the Britannia history that includes an overview of the trip to Canada and the challenges that she and her family face in their new homeland. The second narrative is by Martha Topott. It exists in the form of an oral history recorded by Helen Evans Reid approximately sixty years after the establishment of the Britannia

colony.[13] In this short transcript, the narrator recalls the birth of her son, which took place under horrendous conditions while she and her husband were on the trek between Saskatoon and the homestead sites. The third work is a more extensive account by a Britannia colonist named Mary Hiemstra. Published in 1955, Hiemstra's monograph has been described by Helen Buss as a "blend of novel, memoir, autobiography, and history of settlement" (*Mapping* 74). Hiemstra (née Pinder) was a child when she came to the colony as part of Barr's party, and it is through the voice of a child that she narrates her story. These women have been selected for this segment because each presents her life narrative with a public audience in mind. Lynne Bloom suggests that public forms of autobiography demand of the writer that she "construct [a narrative] with a persona analogous to that of the heroine in a drama who speaks in a distinctive voice" (31). As each of these women takes on this kind of public persona, it is possible to glean insight into her response to the settler environment. As British subjects, life narratives written by these women demonstrate their awareness of their responsibilities to transplant their homeland's values in the new country and to ensure that the new colony was populated by a new generation of Britons. Although their life narratives reveal that these women faced intense social pressure to meet these ideological expectations, it is also possible to discern forms of polite resistance as they speak about issues that have particular resonance for women, including property ownership, childbirth, marriage, and domestic violence.

Alice Rendell and her husband, William, came to Canada as members of the Barr party, but aboard the *Lake Simcoe* instead of the *S.S. Lake Manitoba* with Barr and Lloyd. Born in 1857, Alice would have been approximately forty-six years old upon her arrival

in Canada. She and William had married in 1897, and, at the time of Barr's emigration scheme, she was pregnant with the couple's fourth child. Two of the Rendell children accompanied their parents to Canada. The youngest boy, Eric, remained in England with an acquaintance and joined his parents in the colony about a year later. Unlike many of the colonists, the Rendells came to Canada with some experience in agriculture and with financial resources; hence, they established themselves on their homestead in a relatively short period of time. While many of the colonists made minimal progress in the first months, Bud Rendell—a descendant—explains that, by the end of their first year in Canada, Alice and William had successfully broken their land, planted and harvested crops, and constructed "the first house built of milled lumber in Lloydminster" (62).[14] Alice Rendell, who survived her husband, died in Edmonton, Alberta, in 1944.

Rendell's life narrative occurs in the form of letters that she wrote for an audience which included, at the very least, several family members and British acquaintances. At least one of her letters was printed in a British newspaper, where its purpose was to promote colonization in western Canada.[15] Here Rendell's letter is framed by an editor's endorsement praising her for removing "questions of doubt as to the fertility and productiveness of the lands upon which the British people are invited to locate [in western Canada]" (February 1904 n.pag.). These letters confirm that Rendell takes seriously imperialism's goal to populate western Canada with British people.

Rendell, who writes for a public audience to encourage fellow Britons to emigrate, reinforces the image of the masculine west. For example, on May 15, 1903, she writes: "As I am writing I look out my tent door and see [William] quite happy doing his first ploughing on his own soil." In a letter dated August 12, 1903, she writes a similar

entry: "From another window, I look across and see the 'master of Doris Court' ploughing away for dear life with his fine pair of horses, each acre ploughed meaning the better prospect for the coming year." Rendell is separate from the masculine space when she constructs an image of herself writing from the house about the work of men. In these examples, Rendell reinforces what Catherine Cavanaugh describes as the traditional "assumption that agriculture was an exclusively male enterprise" (505). When Britannia women write about the accomplishments of male counterparts, they are performing imperial work which is to record Britain's progress in the development of a "manly West" (Cavanaugh 506). Statements such as these ones reveal moments when Rendell is most compliant in her role as an imperial wife.

Rendell's husband is present throughout the letters. When inviting fellow Britons to come to Canada, Rendell's offer to provide information to others is made jointly with her husband through use of the first person plural. On January 19, 1904, Rendell anticipates an audience when she writes: "Should this letter be made public and meet the eye of any who may be desirous of coming out the Colony, I can only say we shall be only too pleased to answer any questions or give any information in our power." In a letter dated November, 1905, she writes: "It has come to my ears that some of you are still a thirst for more about Canada, so I am going to try to send you a short account of how we are progressing in this far away land." It is not a surprise that Rendell shares the public space with her husband as she proselytizes on behalf of the expansionist mission. While many women worked tirelessly to promote expansion, Julia Bush suggests that, during the time period in which Rendell wrote her letters, most of them tended to be most comfortable "leaving publications and public platforms to men" (80). In these statements

Rendell shares the public platform with William Rendell when she writes "we," but her juxtaposition of "we" with "I" also emphasizes her desire to represent her own contribution to that work.

Throughout her letters, Rendell remains committed to encouraging others to emigrate to Canada, but she also wants women to receive equitable treatment once they arrive in that country. Rendell's writing style is marked by sudden shifts between the singular and plural pronouns at key moments. Throughout her letters, for example, Rendell consistently uses "we" to demonstrate her ownership of material wealth in the new homeland. She stresses that she is a key participant in decision-making with regards to property selection when she tells her readers: "we are now hunting out a nice spot for our little house" (May 15, 1903). In a bolder moment, Rendell reverses pronoun choice to claim ownership of the homestead: "We are the proud possessors of the best home in the Colony and I think I might also add the best homestead" (January 19, 1904). Such examples reveal moments when a female claims partial ownership of property. If this point seems insignificant, consider the words of Jeanne Perreault who argues that "'I' and 'we' are the most important words in the writing(s) of feminism, continuously transformed and re-enacted as feminists claim the rights of self-definition" (190). Although Perreault refers to "a contemporary feminism," her comments about the "textual enactments of an 'I' and the boundaries of 'we'" have resonance in this context when Rendell uses "we" to identify herself as a property owner (190). As observed elsewhere, Canadian homestead laws made it very difficult for most women to acquire land. Rendell's rhetoric does not entirely enable her to break free of that economic reality

but, nonetheless, her writing style suggests that she is unwilling to accept the terms of a piece of legislation that has been imposed on her.

Rendell's use of "I" and "we" allows her to become visible at times when, as a woman, she would have been excluded from view. Her oscillation between the autobiographical "I" and "we" demonstrates her own awareness of social constraints felt by colonial women, and further suggests that she was committed to the achievement of an autonomous voice despite them. Of course, it could be argued that Rendell merely presents herself as a helpmeet, and in this way creates a narrative that conforms to convention. Moreover, her use of the first person when discussing the homestead could also signify the pride she feels in her husband's accomplishments on the land. I contend that Rendell's use of "I" and "we" at other points in her letters continues to reinforce her claims to equal status to her male counterpart. Rendell continues to oscillate between "I" and "we" not only to enter spaces traditionally dominated by males, but to claim a space where it is possible for her to articulate her emotional responses to the settler experience without inviting criticism.

By the time Rendell immigrated to Canada, British women had long since been taught that, to avoid criticism, it was best to silently bear any hardships associated with settlement life. Indeed, a review of emigration literature such as the *Imperial Colonist* causes Hammerton to conclude that, by the twentieth century, a woman had learned to expect hardships in the colonies and knew that "whatever her class, [she] must be prepared to 'rough it' and to work long and hard at tasks she would disdain at home" (*Emigrant Gentlewomen* 156). Thus a woman's willingness to tackle settlement life took on a moral dimension. Published in 1855, Catharine Parr Traill's *The Canadian Settler's*

Guide is one of the best known publications teaching women that "a little reasoning with themselves would show that inconveniences belong to the nature of their new position" (5). A woman's ability to cheerfully surmount any challenges associated with settlement life marked her as a woman of excellence and, for a British woman, identified her as an ideal female imperialist.

For Britannia women, this message was personally felt in the form of numerous newspaper editorials about the events associated with the Barr scheme. The April 16, 1903, edition of the *Manitoba Free Press* ran a lengthy article titled "The Barr Colonists Arrived Today" acknowledging a "superior lot of women…who have given up comfortable homes to try their fortunes in this new land of promise" (12). The following day, the same newspaper published a companion article titled "Barr Colonists Admired by All." In a subsection titled "Yorkshire Lasses," the newspaper continued to applaud the women for their selflessness, describing them as "full of courage and determination" (4). The article also noted with some disdain that "a few women from London had come out with very vague ideas as to what they were going to do" (4). The overarching message was that Anglo-Canadians wanted the country inhabited by British women who were robust and resourceful. Thus the author of the April 17 article expresses admiration for Mrs. Robertson, "a capable looking woman...who gave the impression of being able to wrestle successfully...with any incidents of pioneer life" (4). It is clear that Britannia women—and men—were under scrutiny in this regard. For men, the pressure was felt to show themselves as capable farmers. According to historian Patrick Dunae, at the turn of the century, Canadians held a particular contempt for "gentleman emigrants, especially English emigrants" (124). Dunae explains that after Confederation, Canadians became

increasingly nationalistic and, about the time that the Britannia colonists emigrated, felt some hostility towards pretentious and "poorly informed Britons" who expected easy and instant success in the country (125). Indeed, at the beginning of the twentieth century, some prospective employers posted signage stating that "No Englishmen Need Apply" (Dunae 124). To be accepted in Canada, an Englishman had to prove himself a success in agriculture. Newspaper articles reflect that Britannia women were placed under a similar kind of scrutiny with expectations that they succeed as farmer's wives and domestics. Such expectations meant that Britannia women had little space in which to speak candidly about any reservations they might have had since, to do so, would have marked them as failures.

It is no wonder that Rendell is quick to emphasize how "everyone is loud in their praises of how all the women have faced their hardships and privations and they were not trifles, I can assure you" (June 4, 1903). Rendell is, however, unwilling to leave hardships unmentioned. To safely speak about some of her difficulties, Rendell shifts between "I" and "we" to describe moments when members of her party were emotionally taxed by their settler experiences. When describing the C.P.R. journey, Rendell recalls, "I was terrified...the train was standing in the roadway and we had literally to be thrown in to escape the danger of being either scorched or stifled with smoke. Once in safely we all felt like breaking down" (April 22, 1903). In another instance, Rendell uses "I" to acknowledge her own homesickness for friends and family in England. She quickly follows with "we" to draw attention away from herself—thereby refusing to admit any weakness on her part—to suggest that the concern she feels is rooted in concern for the entire family, all of whom share in this pain: "I hope [Barnes] will bring some [letters]

back. You cannot have the least idea how we long for some news and some papers, and literature would be so gratefully received" (May 15, 1903).[16] Rendell performs this slippage again when she records details about camping while on the trek: "I shall be so thankful when the warmer weather sets in. I can quite understand the charms of camping then but under the circumstances it has very few charms, I can assure you, and what with the bitter cold and hard ground we don't get much refreshing rest" (May 15, 1903). Thus Rendell gives voice to the difficulties associated with colonization, and, at the same time, points out that the discomforts are not unique to her. Rendell constructs sentences that are open-ended, meaning that she does not differentiate between the perceived experiences of female and male colonists; rather, she amalgamates the two, and, by doing so, obtains a measure of equality for women.

In other circumstances, Rendell must perform a different kind of shift to discuss her experiences. These are situations she cannot share with other settlers through use of the pronoun "we"; in other words, these are experiences that pertain directly to Rendell's body. For example, during the journey, she writes about becoming ill: "I took a chill at Saint John from exposure and a dreadful abscess formed in my face causing me terrible suffering for three days until it broke. But enough of the gloomy side. I cannot give much description of the country we passed through, as pain almost blinded me, but skirting some of the great lakes there were some grand bits of scenery…the vastness of it all just strikes one with awe" (April 22, 1903). Nearly a month later, it is clear that her illness has persisted: "I suppose all the worry and anxiety proved the last straw as far as I was concerned, for I was the next to collapse with a bad chill and bronchitis from which I am still suffering together with an abscess in my face all of which combined makes me feel

very low and out of sorts" (May 15, 1903). As with her earlier mention of the abscess, a jarring transition takes place: "I am writing this on May 17th, dear father's 83rd birthday and my thoughts have been with him." Rendell uses the same technique to speak about an injury to her arm: "I have been somewhat handicapped in my work lately owing to a sprained arm…It has been terribly painful. Dr. Amos feared at first that I had put it out of joint" (December 10, 1903). In this latter example, Rendell suddenly tells readers that the colony's physician has assured her that her arm is not "out of joint" after which she switches abruptly to information about the growth of their farm: "Mr. Rendell has just bought in a piece of railway land adjoining our homestead consisting of 320 acres" (December 10, 1903). Since these discomforts are unique to her body, Rendell cannot use "we" to offset them.

Without the addition of a "we" statement, Rendell's "I" become fragmented and her suffering is underrepresented. This compromise must be made if Rendell is to articulate her story in the socially acceptable format that stipulates a woman should not complain. If Rendell's transition from statements about her body to ones about the landscape or her family appears awkward and abrupt, it bears noting that Rendell is determined to draw some attention to her afflictions. This point suggests that she is unwilling to omit her suffering from her narrative. Rendell's practice of articulating her personal discomfort, followed by a sudden switch to a different topic, is her attempt to represent her difficulties without risking the image she works to construct of herself as an ideal settler woman. Yet, as Bowen notes, Rendell's depictions of her experiences "does not ring true" (175). I argue that by underrepresenting her difficulties, Rendell actually draws her readers' attention to them. Bowen knows—as do all Rendell's readers—that

there is more to these stories than the writer admits, particularly as they relate to Rendell's illnesses. That she feels obliged to write about her bodily afflictions in so cautious a manner suggests that these women felt pressure to portray themselves as stoic and capable when discussing their settler experiences. However, her awareness of that obligation does not prevent Rendell from making herself conspicuous in the narrative.

Rendell's depiction of her body figures in other significant ways. Smith and Watson ask readers of autobiographies to consider how "particular bodily processes take on significance" (*Reading Autobiography* 176). It is important to recall that Alice Rendell was pregnant during the trip to Canada. Her daughter, Alice Miriam, was born in August, 1903, meaning that at the time of the trek between Saskatoon and the homestead, Rendell would have been approximately in her fourth month of pregnancy. The first that Rendell mentions the baby, however, is on October 21, 1903, when she writes of being "overjoyed to receive six home letters from my dear old friends in acknowledgment of the news of the birth of my little daughter." Here it does seem that friends and family had previously received some verification of the birth, which, in turn, suggests that other letters remain to be recovered. Nonetheless, within the available letters, there is a curious silence around the pregnancy and delivery of the child that raises questions. Since motherhood was stressed as the female imperialist's main priority, it is, at first, a surprise that the subject of pregnancy does not filter into Rendell's letters, particularly since, as Harriet Blodgett points out, by the early nineteenth century, "Englishwomen, who write for themselves, within the limits of their characteristic reticence can admit their anxieties and ordeals [related to childbirth] when they so choose" (172). In her study titled *In the Family Way,* Judith Schneid Lewis discusses the portrayal of childbirth in letters

specifically and includes a passage from an epistle composed by Hyacinthe, Lady Hatherton, in 1813. Hatherton, whose family is from the British aristocracy, addresses her letter to her brother and includes a detailed passage that describes her labour pains: "Since writing the above I have been seized with every symptom of approaching confinement and every moment I am in terrible pain" (153). Hatherton's acknowledgement of her labour pains is starkly different from Britannia women's descriptions of pregnancy and childbirth, and raises questions about why Britannia women are so cautious when discussing these matters. How women discuss the transition to motherhood varies within different social milieus, but whatever the expression, motherhood is always an important subject within a culture. This point is substantiated by Alison Bashford who points out that "the rituals and practices around the experiences of pregnancy, labour, and breast-feeding are highly culture-bound" (124). I argue that the ways that Britannia women discuss—or do not discuss—pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood are closely related to imperial culture as it existed at the beginning of the twentieth century when women faced an extreme pressure to bear and to raise healthy children who could, in turn, support the empire's growth.

This argument is best continued with an examination of Martha Topott's oral history. The *S.S. Lake Manitoba*'s list indicates that Mrs. Topott was twenty-five years old at the time of the Barr scheme. Her husband, W.S. Topott, was a butcher by trade. The oral history begins with the explanation that Mrs. Topott was well into the final trimester of her pregnancy and that "Mr. Topott was a Boer war veteran" (1). These factors have an important relationship to one another, since a number of the colonists were returned Boer War soldiers. Here it is important to recall that Britons' unsatisfactory

performance in Africa had resulted in a lingering stigma. As Anna Davin argues, "a poor military performance in the Boer War had dramatized fears of national inadequacy and exposed the poor health of the working class in Britain" (12). "The result," continues Davin, "was a surge of concern about the bearing and rearing of children—the next generation of soldiers and workers, the Imperial race.... [and] the person most responsible [to achieve this corrective was] the mother" (12). Antoinette Burton echoes this point, stating that "the crisis of confidence after the Boer War made imperial stability and racial concerns of paramount importance in Victorian culture" (123). The implications for women in this regard are starkly stated by Bashford, who writes that "for British governments during and after the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902, the quantity as well as the health of the domestic British population mattered for the continuance of the Empire: crudely, white British women should reproduce more (and better) individuals for the expansion of England, for the imperial race" (126). If ex-Boer War soldiers felt some embarrassment over a poor performance in the war, accountability to fix the problem belonged to women who were made responsible to produce a healthy new generation. To deliver and to raise a healthy son would thus confirm Topott's success as a mother and as a female imperialist.

Lingering traces of this ideology are present in Topott's story, years after the events of which she speaks. Her use of pronouns suggests that she remains sensitive about some of the social stigmas that exist in relation to British motherhood at the time of the colony's inception. British women were expected to pay attention to cleanliness because a sanitary environment would ensure the survival of children. It was believed that one of the reasons for high infant mortality in Britain was the lack of cleanliness in

the domestic sphere. As Davin notes about life in England, by the twentieth century, "health visitors...'[went] from house to house...to give hints to mothers on the feeding and clothing of their children...[and] to urge, on all possible occasions, the importance of cleanliness'" (37). Barr and other imperialists portrayed Canada as a healthy place, but settlement life also produced many unfavourable conditions for rearing children.

Certainly, by 1903, there was considerable emphasis on sanitation in the colonies. A movement was underway to provide "British women in India, in Queensland, in Singapore, or in Jamaica… [with] detailed sanitary instruction in management of the private and the domestic: in dress, rest, eating, confinement…and management of infants and children" (Bashford 131). Although Bashford refers to "tropical hygiene," sanitation is also relevant within a Canadian context (131). An obligation to practice meticulous hygiene is felt by Topott who writes that "a lot of women and children were sick with dysentery" because, she notes, "they would strain the wigglers out of the slough water with their handkerchiefs" (1). Note how, in this instance, Topott avoids the use of "I" or "we." Instead, she uses the third person to distance herself from the drinking of slough water. Yet, when achieving cleanliness, Topott suddenly rejoins the narrative: "we washed the laundry in the slough water, in a bowl, and then spread the things out on the bushes to dry" (4). Although slough water is used both for drinking and for washing clothes, Topott only portrays herself making things clean. She distances herself from the act of drinking the water thereby avoiding an act that was unsanitary. She uses "we" in creative and varied ways to reduce her chance of invoking a critique of her behaviour; at the same time, she accentuates her own experiences and remains present in her narrative. When Topott cleans her clothes in a slough, "we" enables her to become visible when,

out of necessity, she and other British women find a way to maintain cleanliness. Thus the chosen pronoun lends an air of respectability to the act of using slough water to clean the clothes. Use of the third person plural—such as the moment she talks about how "they" drank slough water—allows Topott to temporarily disappear from the narrative so that she can disassociate herself with a particular action that might have jeopardized her health and, by extension, the health of the new baby for which she was responsible.

Like Rendell, Topott struggles to describe events involving her physical body, particularly as they relate to giving birth. Although she does speak about childbirth, her description of her labour is disjointed: "It was a difficult birth. The blankets were just thrown on the ground, and I had to take it naturally, and everything seemed to go fairly well" (2). Topott describes how, after the baby was born, some of the other colonists "took the wagon top, two hoops, one at my head and one at my feet and they put the tent right over [me] (2)." It was inside this makeshift shelter, somewhere near Battleford, that Topott spent several days on the frozen prairie recuperating from the birth and from "a dreadful cold" (2). "They didn't really think I might get over it, a lot of them," comments Topott (2). Oddly, although Topott's post-natal discomfort must have been extreme, she refuses to complain, writing instead that "we managed very well, but the living was pretty poor" (2). Martha Topott and Rendell practice similar kinds of slippages in their narratives to mute their complaints.

When Topott and Rendell make creative use of pronouns, they create a method to control the degree to which they are visible in their narratives. This tactic enables them to be highly visible, partially visible, or invisible as they desire. Many autobiographers opt to gain such control as they write their narratives; thus it becomes possible, as Smith and

Watson suggest, to interpret autobiographical documents based upon the ways that "the body becomes visible in the narrative" (*Reading Autobiography* 175). "We" enables these women to soften their presences in their narratives at key moments where their statements might be construed as an admittance of weakness or a complaint. In contrast, the authors are most visible with "I" statements at moments when they are least likely to leave the impression that they are anything other that capable settler wives and mothers.

In the case of Britannia women, this writing practice suggests that they are highly attuned to the demands Britain placed on its mothers. Topott, for example, is highly visible when she describes her ability to care for the baby. "I nursed my baby for six months," states Topott. "I had lots and there was no milk to be had. The tinned milk was dear, 35¢ a tin" (4). Topott's use of "I" in the context of breastfeeding produces a moment where the female body is highly visible. Her candour is not a surprise given some of the cultural practices around breastfeeding in Britain. According to John Tosh, as early as the eighteenth century, breastfeeding was thought to be "a less risky means of feeding than the alternatives, and that it was the best way of establishing an enduring bond between mother and child" (45). This belief grew within British society so that "by the early nineteenth century breast-feeding had acquired a weighty moral dimension as well: it symbolized the unstinted altruism which was unique to mothers" (Tosh 45). By the twentieth century, it was widely stressed that "babies who were not breastfed were very much more susceptible to infection; it was claimed especially of those fed on condensed milk that they had all the appearance of health but no resistance" (Davin 35). It is therefore possible link the moment that Topott accentuates her success at breastfeeding—which includes rejection of the expensive tinned milk—to imperialist

ideology that reinforced the production of healthy offspring as one of British women's primary responsibilities.

Moments where Britannia women can demonstrate their success as nurturers of children are precisely where they make themselves visible in their narratives. Rendell is quick to point out to friends and relatives back home the good health of her children: "My little ones are quite happy, the little Canadian girl being especially bonnie and thriving splendidly" (October 21, 1903). Rendell's use of "my" confidently signifies that she is an excellent mother capable of rearing healthy British children in the new homeland. Healthy children are her crowning accomplishment: as with Topott, Rendell assumes a sense of ownership of her children that remains noticeably apart from her husband. The freedom to emphasize their successes as mothers is observed in writings by both Rendell and Topott, even though the latter woman records her oral history decades later.

It is true that Rendell and Topott portray themselves as ideal mothers, and that this representation suggests their compliance with imperialism's push to develop a stronger generation of Britons. No assumption should be made, however, that these women are accepting of the deplorable conditions under which they are expected to bear these children. Barr had promised the colonists that he would provide a "hospital equipped on a modern scale, in all respects up to date" (Hospital Insurance Circular, March 1903). Healthcare was of particular significance to women because of maternity issues. While improved conditions for women and children was a goal of imperial health reform, the reality was that for most "British women [and] white settler women…in the Empire, birth was a traditional or domestic, rather than an institutional event, until well

into the twentieth century" (Bashford 125). Hence women like Rendell and Topott gave birth to children at home or, worse, in makeshift tents.

Barr's failure to deliver on this promise reveals the indifference of a patriarchal structure that, despite placing great demands on mothers, refused to support these women as they worked to fulfill their maternal duties. The unresponsiveness to women's unique needs is reflected in the breakdown of fees that Barr plans to charge for use of the hospital. In a circular letter outlining the terms under which a cooperative hospital would exist in the new colony, Barr outlines the fees that will be charged to the colonists: "Adults (Male or Female)—£1 per head per annum (in maternity cases an extra £ 2 2 s. per week will be charged)" (Hospital Insurance Circular, March 1903). The shortage of medical care for the colonists—both men and women—was not unique to the Britannia colony, and, as Bashford confirms, the result was that many such groups "argued strongly for more and better institutions, greater funding, more personnel, and the services of British medicine, especially in the twentieth-century Empire by which time health and welfare had become firmly recognized as government responsibilities" (132). Rendell demonstrates a particular interest in women's health issues as evidenced by her conversion of part of the family's home into a "Nursing Station providing care for the sick, and women in childbirth" (Bud Rendell 64). Her commitment to health reform is confirmed in a letter dated December 10, 1903, in which she thanks her English friends for their support: "And now, dear friends, a little bird tells me some of you are just working hard for the benefit of the hospital here in response to my appeal. I can find no words to express my delight and gratitude and am positive that your kindly effort in so good a cause will surely bring its own reward." Rendell's interest in health has its genesis

in her own experiences. In the same letter, she explains the reason she is motivated to provide a hospital: "You would not wonder at my taking this so much to heart, could you have witnessed what I have or been through what I myself have suffered. You cannot realize how awful it is." Had Rendell chosen to write "we" as she often does, she would have minimized her personal suffering. Her choice of pronoun in this instance is assertive and suggests that Rendell held members of the empire accountable to deliver needed medical care to the colonists.

Topott shares a similar view that the empire is responsible to provide for the colonists' health needs. Although she is diplomatic when she tells Reid that "perhaps [Barr] did his best," she emphasizes that the failed hospital scheme had an impact upon her: "We paid for the hospital on the boat and then I was to pay so much as long as I was in. The hospital ticket was to get me in the hospital. We heard of cases of people losing money but I can't say I definitely know of any one, outside of the hospital scheme, who lost anything" (3). Despite what appears to be some prompting from Reid as interviewer to absolve Barr of this responsibility, it is a resolute Topott who refuses to concede on this point: "I don't think I can mention one name of anyone who I could honestly say had been robbed by Mr. Barr. Aside from the hospital scheme" (3). Written many decades after the colony's birth, Topott's determination to bring attention to the botched hospital scheme underlines her commitment to highlight issues that were of particular significance to women. Her unwillingness to relinquish her point about the failed plans for a hospital is remarkable, given that the interviewer is clearly sympathetic towards Barr.[17] Although Topott and Rendell create their narratives at different times, both believe that imperial representatives are accountable to provide for the medical needs of Britons who

emigrated to the colony. Topott understands Barr, in his role as organizer of the imperialist scheme, as the one responsible to provide for her medical needs during the early days of the colony, while Rendell asks for the cooperation of persons who support colonization from within England.

Mary Hiemstra (née Pinder) is also committed to exposing similar issues encountered by Britannia women. Hiemstra's *Gully Farm* was published in 1955 and outlines her family's first year in the colony. She later continues her family's story in a short sequel of instalments titled *Growing Up on Gully Farm*.[18] Hiemstra's mother, Sara Pinder, is listed on the *S.S. Lake Manitoba*'s register as twenty-nine years old. Her husband, Walter Pinder, is described as a thirty-year old farmer. In addition to Mary, who is the eldest of three children and approximately five years of age, the family includes a younger daughter named Lily and an infant son named Jack.[19]

It bears clarification as to why Hiemstra's work, described by Buss as a text that takes on "a realistic novel format," should be classified as a life narrative in the same way as Rendell's letters and Topott's interview (*Mapping* 72). Buss argues that, despite its novelistic appearance, *Gully Farm* is an autobiographical text. She cites Marcus Billson to argue that Hiemstra's text can be appropriately classified as a memoir because it "covers a limited amount of time, [in which]...there is the possibility...for a great deal of introspection, which can detail many inner psychic changes" (*Mapping* 73). As she recalls pivotal events from her childhood, Hiemstra invents a persona in the form of a child self through which she reveals to her readers secrets about some of the Britannia women. Thus her text is a confessional one in that she shares information that would otherwise have remained unacknowledged by her audience; a tactic that is particularly

appropriate for drawing attention to women's domestic issues. Commenting specifically on its purpose within women's autobiography, Rita Felski confirms that a "confessional text [is one that] makes public that which has been private, typically claiming to avoid filtering mechanisms of objectivity and detachment in its pursuit of the truth of subjective experience" (83). Hiemstra's child's voice meets this criteria as little Mary admits confusion about what she witnesses happening to some of the women as, in accordance with their culture's values, they attempt to fulfill their domestic roles as wives, mothers, and helpmeets.

Ironically, one of the women Hiemstra discusses is Martha Topott. Recalling Topott's advanced state of pregnancy during the trek, Hiemstra writes: "Everybody along the trail, including me, knew about the Topot baby" (79).[20] Yet Hiemstra's attempts to obtain specifics about the pending birth are unsuccessful because "the women always lowered their voices" when speaking about the matter (79). Lowered voices immediately signify that the subject of childbirth is a transgressive one from which a child is appropriately excluded. Thus little Mary ponders the dilemma on her own:

> It was the baby's problem that bothered me. Babies, I had been told, came in the doctor's bag. I hadn't seen a doctor since we left England, so how had the baby managed the trip? And even supposing it got across the ocean to Saskatoon…how would it ever manage to find Mrs. Topot when she moved every day? (79)

Mary's understanding of the events is narrated in a child's voice during the course of which the adult Hiemstra, whose presence is always assumed, invites readers—who presumably are knowledgeable about what childbirth entails—to laugh at the way little

Mary understands the situation. Yet, her childish interpretation of the events is also an astute observation. Barr's hospital circular had promised the colonists a hospital immediately upon arrival at his settlement site; moreover, prior to departure, he assures them that "the staff and officers for this Hospital will travel with my main party" (Hospital Insurance Circular, March 1903). Although some medical personnel do appear to have been available to some of the colonists during the journey to the settlement site, these individuals are clearly incapable of attending to the disparate medical needs of the more than two thousand colonists spread across various stages of the trip.[21] Hiemstra combines a child persona and humour to soften her critique of Barr's scheme, but a critique is, nonetheless, present as Mary emphasizes the lack of medical support available to Mrs. Topot. Indeed, on a second occasion, Mary points out that there was no physician to assist Mrs. Topot or her child:

> I worried a lot about that baby, but he managed very well. He arrived one night when the tent was pitched beside the trail. There was neither doctor nor nurse, and no light except that given by a smoky barn-yard lantern. (80)

Rather than a physician, it is a fellow colonist woman who attends to Topot during the delivery. After the baby is born, this woman comments to Sara Pinder that Topot's labour was a particularly difficult one, and that she is grateful to have given birth to her own children at home in England where "things were a bit more civilized" (80). What Hiemstra ultimately portrays is the resourcefulness of women who, despite Barr's reassurances that they would be "specially cared for," often had to fend for themselves as they provided makeshift medical care to one another (Barr pamphlet, Christmas 13). Like

Topott and Rendell, Hiemstra is subtly critical of the imperial scheme for its failure to provide for women in childbirth.

Hiemstra also recalls a young, single woman named Beth who traveled with her parents as part of Barr's party. In this instance, she remarks on the prospects for matrimony in Canada stating that "unmarried women were as rare as apple blossoms in August," and that, by contrast, "single men were as plentiful as mice in a wheat field" (77). It is therefore not a surprise that Beth is pursued by "a young Canadian" while on the trek (77). Hiemstra explains that the young man is "well aware of the woman shortage" in Canada, and, as a result, he approaches the trekking party in search of an eligible female (76). A courtship takes place and, much to Beth's parents' dismay, the young couple decides to marry. Part of the parents' concern stems from the fact that the Britannia colonists felt a "degree of animosity towards their colonial cousins" (Bowen 59). This hostility is reflected in a comment made by Pinder who states that "in England a man would have sense enough to stay away when he knew he wasn't wanted" (78). Here we return to the tension that was felt between Canadians and Britons. In keeping with an imperial mindset, Sara Pinder suggests that Englishmen are superior to their Canadian counterparts; further, she hints that a Canadian man could not be trusted to respect a woman's chastity.

The adult women are concerned about the young man's intentions towards Beth and anxious to preserve the younger woman's reputation. Given that their assigned role was to exert their civilizing influences in Canada, British women were expected to model chaste and highly conventional behaviours in the colonies. Writing of this matter in her essay, "Australian Frontier Feminism and the Marauding White Man," Marilyn Lake

argues that "sexual promiscuity [was] regarded as [a] particularly heinous offence in women" (126). Lake provides further insight into the idea that, within the Australian colonies, "unsettled men poised a particular sexual threat to the women and girls who shared their terrain" (128). Elsewhere, Philippa Levine speaks about Britons' belief that "sex in colonial surroundings needed greater regulation and control than in temperate Britain…where the curbing of sexual appetite was, by the nineteenth century, a mark of good breeding and proper behaviour" (Sexuality, Gender, Empire 134). In this particular episode of *Gully Farm,* worry over Beth's reputation is the crux of the problem, as indicated in a conversation between Sara Pinder and Beth's mother. Upon learning of the couple's plans to marry, Pinder asks how they will arrange an appropriate ceremony on the prairies. Beth's mother responds that her daughter plans to go "back to Saskatoon with [the young man] first thing in the morning" (78). Beth's mother continues: "I tell her she's taking an awful risk going off like that, unmarried and all, but she won't listen: She says they'll be married by night, but how do I know?" (78).

Hiemstra does not provide readers with information about Beth's outcome other than to confirm that the young woman leaves to return to Saskatoon with her beau as planned. The morning of Beth's departure is marked by a conversation between Mary and her mother that outlines the tragic nature of the events:

> 'What was she crying about?' I asked.
>
> 'She didn't want to leave her folks.' Mother started mixing bannock.
>
> 'Then why did she? Nobody made her get married.'
>
> 'You don't understand'….

'I certainly didn't understand.' (78-79)

It is apparent that the female colonists have, once again, been left to fend for themselves in the new country. Had either of the founding fathers been present throughout this particular ordeal, one of them could certainly have performed the marriage ceremony. The naivety of the child's voice enables Hiemstra to write about the disparity between conservative imperialists' hope that British women would model ideal behaviour in the colony with the realities that faced them in that place. The child's voice provides Hiemstra with a means of escape just prior to the point where she might have articulated more direct explanation about marriage, chastity, and female sexuality in the colonial context.

Hiemstra's most powerful story is one she tells about a Britannia woman who is the victim of an alcoholic husband capable of violence. The subject is so sensitive that Hiemstra avoids naming the involved woman and her husband, whom she simply refers to as "the big man." Historical information about domestic abuse in settler homes is difficult to find; hence, Hiemstra's cautious approach to the subject is not a surprise. Similarly concluding that the mention of domestic violence is taboo in much of settler literature, Melody Graulich reminds us that, despite its prevalence in homes, the "abuse of women has been an undercover subject in [western] society" (111). When considering the causes of this social problem, James Gray suggests that "wife-beating [on the prairies] was a frequent offshoot of over-indulgence" (46). Once again, social pressure further complicated matters for these women. In twentieth-century Canada, as Hammerton explains, "[British colonial] women, quite simply, were expected to refine and civilize their husbands" (*Emigrant Gentlewomen* 23). It is small wonder that settler women

tended to be discreet about issues involving domestic unrest since admissions of violence or alcohol abuse in the home constituted their failures to refine and civilize their partners. Thus Hiemstra introduces the subject, but her slippages between adulthood and childhood are an apparent strategy to guardedly highlight a subject that continues to be a forbidden one long after the colony had been founded:

> The big man …was one of those who came home late almost every night. Even in the day-time he had a loud voice, and a habit of waving his arms, but at night his voice was like thunder. He and two or three other men usually returned from town together….The big man's wife was a quiet woman with a thin, pale face and lonely eyes. She spent most of her time taking care of her two small children, and didn't visit much at the other tents. 'She spends too much time by herself,' Mother said on the night of the row. 'He ought to stay at home more instead of running around with those single men.' (60)

Here Mary recalls that the family's short stay in Saskatoon was marred by what was considered abhorrent behaviour by some of the men. Bowen argues that several men overindulged in alcohol while camped in Saskatoon, only to return late at night to "wake the camp with their drunken [ness]" (106). It is on such a night that Mary hears the big man "fall over the tent-ropes" as he returns to the campsite after visiting a saloon (62). Mary's parents also hear the commotion:

> 'Walter, hadn't you better go and help him?' Mother whispered.
>
> 'No.' Dad sounded disgusted. 'Let the darned fool help himself. If he bangs himself up a bit it might knock some sense into him.'

> 'And his poor wife so lonely,' Mother said. 'He ought to be ashamed of himself.' (62)

In the morning, Hiemstra wakes to learn that the woman is dead. Hiemstra writes that she "never knew what really happened to the wife of the big man" (65). She uses her child's voice to sidestep this information which has lead some, such as Bowen, to conclude that "a [Britannia] man's repeated drunkenness led to his wife's suicide" (106). However, Hiemstra shows that abuse also exists within the relationship, recalling how she first overhears her mother telling her father about the big man's treatment of his wife: "The way he shouted at her, and she so far from home" states Pinder (59). Later, Mary imagines violent imagery in relation to the big man: "I hadn't seen [him that night], but somehow I knew that his long arms were waving, his face was white and spongy like dough, and his mouth was wide and slack like a purse with a broken string" (62). Hiemstra further suggests the possibility of domestic abuse when she cites a conversation she overhears between her father and another colonist:

> I lifted the tent wall a little and looked out. Everything was hushed and still. Not far away a man sat alone on the tongue of his wagon....
>
> After awhile he came over to our tent. 'What do you make of it?' He asked in a whisper.
>
> Dad shook his head. 'The fellow was a fool to leave her alone so much,' he said....
>
> 'Then you don't think…?' The man twisted a button on his coat.
>
> 'I don't know,' Dad said. (63)

Whatever the cause of death, the wife is a victim of a violent domestic situation that, at the very least, includes verbal abuse. A point frequently stressed throughout this portion of the narrative is that the big man is responsible to ensure his wife's emotional well-being. When speaking to Mary's father, Pinder is strident in her criticism of the man, stating that "he ought to stay at home more" (60). While Mary's father does agree that a man should abstain from alcohol, he initially makes light of the woman's situation when he responds to Pinder's concern with what he considers to be a humorous comment: "But it isn't every woman that has a man like me he said" (60). It is only after the woman's death that Walter Pinder validates his wife's opinions. Hence Sara Pinder leads the family to realize that husbands are accountable to their wives and, writing years later, Hiemstra continues to legitimize her mother's point of view. In its day, Pinder's demand that a husband be accountable to his wife was a feminist gesture. As Lake explains, the "tyrannical double standard [that made it women's responsibilities to civilize men] …became a major focus of feminist reform…in demanding that men, too, discipline and control themselves—that they literally live up to the 'civilized' standards that they invoked to justify their political power" (127-128). Because the adult Hiemstra is always present in the narrative—despite the child's voice—she promotes her mother's views. Pinder sympathizes with this woman, as she does with Topot and Beth. In the context of critical work done on women's autobiography, Hiemstra's identification with her mother is important. Citing the work of Nancy Chodorow, Smith and Watson argue that "feminine identification is based...on the gradual learning of a way of being familiar in everyday life, and exemplified by the [mother]...with whom [the daughter] has been

more involved" (qtd. in *Women, Autobiography, Theory* 17). Thus Hiemstra promotes her mother's viewpoint, even though she does not directly articulate it as her own.

Despite the vagueness that characterizes Hiemstra's text, she draws attention to important events that would have taken place in the private lives of settler women and, by doing so, she structures a critique of an imperial scheme that fails to adequately support women while making many demands of them. In each of the examples provided, emigration to Canada places women at a disadvantage when it comes to coping with issues related to female sexuality, domestic abuse, and childbirth. Such issues tended to be glossed over in immigration literature; as already mentioned, the Christmas 1902 Barr pamphlet falsely assures its readers that, in Canada, resources will be available to care for women. Hiemstra's strongest contribution is her emphasis of women's issues that are not otherwise addressed in narratives about the Britannia colony. Indeed, she points out that the risks women faced could often be extreme in the colonial environment.

At the outset of *Gully Farm*, Hiemstra presents what becomes a common theme throughout her narrative: that Britain's push to colonize regions outside the homeland resulted in a number of complications for women. She reveals that it is her father who drives the decision to go to Canada, and that her mother did not share his enthusiasm. Although Sara Pinder does not want to go to Canada, it falls to her to maintain the family unit. Pinder tells her brother that she has no choice other than to accompany her husband: "They're Walter Pinder's children and it's up to him to take care of them. If he goes we all go…If he doesn't go, he'll never be satisfied and I'm not going to be left" (22). In contrast, Mary's unmarried Aunt Jane must remain in England to care for elderly parents. Mary's aunt is one of Britain's surplus women, and she longs to go to Canada. Although

she lives a comfortable life in England, there are few marriageable men, meaning, as Aunt Jane performs her duty to her parents, she will lead a solitary life with little hope for a family of her own. The sacrifices weigh heavily on her aunt who, according to Mary, "lacks sparkle" (14). This situation is powerfully narrated by Hiemstra who suddenly abandons her child's voice to state that "a girl gave her life for her family in those days" (14). This rare slippage into an adult voice marks Hiemstra's most direct criticism of Britain's social structure and the disparate demands it places on women. Here, the author demonstrates how the social pressure felt by British women to support the colonies has the potential to impact them in many negative ways. Aunt Jane can imagine no fulfilling life other than emigration, while Sara Pinder is devastated by having to leave her homeland.

At the same time, Hiemstra's critique remains subtle. Since Sara Pinder eventually conforms and accepts life in Canada, while being an excellent mother and helpmeet to Walter, it is difficult to tell if Hiemstra criticizes or endorses expansion. I believe a critique is present, but that Hiemstra is careful when structuring it, to avoid stepping outside the stereotypical representation of the Britannia woman as helpmeet and mother.

Earlier I state that Britannia women came to Canada during a particularly unstable period. Ardent imperialists had created a system under which women were expected to function as civilizers and mothers from within the domestic sphere and women who desired less traditional roles were frowned upon. Indeed, Hammerton outlines how the push to have women populate the colonies in western Canada where they would enact "respectable English motherhood...was an integral part of the conservative reaction

against the apparent threat of the 'New Woman'...associated with greater female mobility and increased female employment" (*Emigrant Gentlewomen* 189). Of course, respectable English motherhood depended on a woman's acquisition of a marriage partner and a home. Yet the range of socially acceptable options available to imperial men was far broader, causing many of them to move away from marriage. Tosh argues that, on the whole, "young men could choose between a number of occupations which ruled out marriage…but all paled into insignificance beside colonial careers….The empire was run by bachelors; in the public mind it represented devotion to duty or profit…undistracted by feminine ties" (174-175). Such a mindset is observed in McCormick's diary, in which this particular Britannia colonist states his relief over having "no family hindrances" (May 9, 1903). Candour of this kind was not an option for Britannia women whose most respectable occupations were marriage and motherhood.

Under imperial politics, married women also had a duty to support their husbands in the colonies. Janet Floyd points out that, throughout the nineteenth century, "popular representations [tended to depict] women objecting to their husbands' decisions to emigrate—hence their undeserved suffering" (69). This trope of the disapproving settler wife, according to Floyd, resulted in a "misogynistic" response during which it was claimed that women who did not enthusiastically support their male counterparts "blighted the optimism of their more dynamic husbands" (69). This tone is found in the Britannia archive in a memoir written by Harry Pick. Pick's monograph, like Hiemstra's, is a blend of novel and memoir. Published in 1928, Pick's reminiscence depicts a woman named Martha Trailey:

> Martha Trailey was a smallish woman with faded, yellow hair; and she was a scold. Also she carried the worship of cleanliness to the point where it becomes a nuisance. The husbands of such women never know the glory of dropping cigar ash on their own carpets, neither do they experience the joy of paddling through the house in muddy boots. They slink about their own homes like lodgers three months in arrears …[and] they are likely to look henpecked and soured, and soon begin secretly to wish they were either unmarried or dead, whichever strikes them as being the more preferable state. (87)

Pick contrasts Trailey with her daughter, Esther, who is "as lovely as the sparking, spring morning itself" (89). Far less concerned about neatness and the domestic sphere, the differences between Esther and Mrs. Trailey demonstrate the disparate points of view that existed in relation to the conduct of women. It is clear in Pick's narrative that men are the sole owners of "their own homes" and that women should be submissive and compliant (87). In Pick's memoir, female civilizers overly concerned about cleanliness and morality are not seen as desirable companions. When, for example, Bert asks Esther's opinion about "the drink question," the latter responds that "she is not rabidly prejudiced" (91). "In fact," states Esther, "I think a good spree would do some temperance fanatics good" (91). Certainly, Esther does not fit the traditional image of the imperial civilizing woman. Within the Pick narrative, the depictions of Martha and Esther Trailey demonstrate disparate views towards womanhood. A comparison can be made between attitudes towards women in colonial Canada and Australia since, as Lake explains, in Australia, although "feminists were emboldened to attempt a transformation of the free-

wheeling, independent [man] into a responsible, caring, temperate, chaste, self-controlled considerate, selfless Domestic Man; [at times], their intentions were met with considerable resistance" (128). A similar climate of hostility is demonstrated in western Canada where the portrayal of Mrs. Trailey is a misogynistic one. Indeed, Mrs. Trailey is an inevitable failure. By conservative values she fails to civilize her husband or to raise a proper daughter—given their liberal views on alcohol—whereby in Pick's view, her desire to achieve domestic order is what makes her undesirable.

As Hiemstra demonstrates with her story about Beth, Britannia women were expected to enact perfect, sometimes impractical, imperial manners to support efforts to develop the colony. Failure to do so left them vulnerable to criticisms from those in Canada and in the homeland. It is not a surprise that women such as Topott, Rendell, and Hiemstra write in ways that minimize any risks associated with those disparate demands. However, to suggest that Britannia men did not experience any social pressure would be a mistake. "Men in Western culture," argues Paul John Eakin, "have not necessarily seen themselves as enjoying the transcendent and empowering freedom that their position as 'universal' subjects would presumably confer" (37). Eakin believes that "there is widespread evidence in biography and autobiography today that living as bodies figures centrally *for both men and women* in their sense of themselves as selves" (37). Hiemstra makes this point when she recalls how her Uncle Sam had "dreamed of being a soldier and going to India. He had tried again and again to enlist, but he was too thin, and although he ate a fantastic amount he couldn't gain an ounce" (7). This inability to gain weight had an impact on Uncle Sam's self-esteem whose "feet always seemed to drag a little, and his pale eyes were always anxious even when he smiled" (7). This stigma

followed British men into western Canada where they also had to prove themselves to disapproving Anglo-Canadians who suspected that Britons were incompetent and ill-suited to Canadian life.

To some extent, these pressures dictated how men wrote. William Rendell's letter alludes to his emotional distress over leaving England. At one point, he writes, "I with my wife and children…left the old country, not without many a heartache for all near and dear to us that we were leaving behind" (July 22, 1903). Since the imperial "characteristics extolled for men were bravery, endurance, discipline, and duty," men like William Rendell had to curtail emotions that fell outside those desired characteristics (Johnson 131). In this example, William Rendell borrows Alice Rendell's use of "we" to soften his emotional response by sharing it with his wife and fellow travelers. It should be noted, however, that William Rendell seldom writes this way. His overall tone and his use of "I" mark him as a subject who has an assumed right to power. Alice's shifts between "I" and "we" mark her frequent need for caution, and the regularity with which these slippages occur make them the norm rather than an exception.

This discovery indicates, as does Graulich, that while "men are shaped by patriarchal expectations, that they too are victims of gender roles and of economic exploitation, [women lives are, by comparison,] far more circumscribed" (115). The fact that Rendell, Topott, and Hiemstra all use rhetorical slippages with frequency speaks to the lingering power of the political climate in the colony during the early years. These women use a series of oscillations throughout their narratives that can be seen as attempts to address a variety of disparities imposed on them. At the same time, they reinforce the image of the ideal settler woman. Whether seeking recognition as co-owners of the

homestead, holding the empire accountable to deliver medical care to the colonists, or drawing attention to women's issues such as domestic abuse, these authors do not object to the image of the ideal mother and helpmeet, but to inequities that make it difficult for women to fulfill these roles.

Chapter Three

"Finished all the Cleaning and had Everything Straight by Tea Time." Diaries and Britannia Women's Practical Work for Empire[22]

A look at life narratives by Martha Topott, Alice Rendell, and Mary Hiemstra demonstrates how women's emigration to a settler society in western Canada was accompanied by a number of serious hazards to their emotional well-being and personal safety. Women's health issues, too few amenities, domestic difficulties, and concerns about sexual propriety were but some of the challenges that settler women faced as they began their lives in new countries far from home. These challenges resonated with Britannia women in particular ways; for example, as British women at the turn of the twentieth century, they felt intense social pressure from the imperial homeland to succeed as mothers and to populate the colony with members of the British race. As will be revealed in the upcoming section, Britannia women countered such pressures by creating community networks. Of course the difficulties that Britannia women encountered were similar to those faced by any number of other settler women. Moreover, their coping mechanism—socialization among members of their own ethnic group—is also not a strategy unique to the British colonists. However, as members of the empire, Britannia women could legitimately represent social interactions as labour, as evidenced in a sampling of diaries written by women from that group.[23]

Only three diaries would surface throughout the course of my search for life narratives by Britannia women. Initially, these diaries seem unremarkable. Each woman uses an unemotional style to create a diary that is sparse and factual: diaries that chronicle daily activities such as housework, farm work, tea time and the weather. In this fashion,

the writers appear to be compliant and unquestioning of the terms and conditions of their lives. Except for the family names and acquaintances unique to each woman, the tone across these diaries is similar to an extent that the content in each is interchangeable. When the diaries are considered in the context of early twentieth-century imperialism in western Canada, however, they provide valuable insight into the ways that Britannia women inscribe themselves as doers of particular kinds of work. Their representation of what constitutes work is a means by which they validate their participation in social activities that are needed to renegotiate the terms of their lives as settler women. As I will demonstrate, the reserved tone common across these diaries is a strategy that is well suited to achieve this end.

The first of the three diarists is a young woman named Elsie Nowell who came to Canada after the initial party of Britannia colonists had settled near, and in, the Lloydminster region.[24] Elsie's brother, Lawrence, was the first member of the family to come to Canada, arriving in 1902.[25] The following year, Elsie's father, Samuel, emigrated with the Barr party, although, according to a short unpublished memoir composed by Lawrence Nowell, Samuel was not an official member of that group; rather, he "happened to sail for Canada on one of the old Beaver Lines with the advance party of the Barr Colonists" (6). Lawrence Nowell further explains that "Samuel's arrival [to Canada], and journey to the newly formed tent town of Lloydminster was followed by his wife Annie, and his daughter Elsie" in 1904 (1). The family settled near Marshall, a township about ten miles east of Lloydminster. Marshall became home to many Britannia colonists, including Nowell's future husband, Fred Kent. Nowell was still a teenager at the time of her first journal entries in 1907. Entries are sporadic in that year and the next.

It is in 1909 that the young woman begins to keep her diary with a more substantive series of chronological records.

Far less background information is available about the second diarist who is referred to in this project as Jones. Entries in her diary cover most of 1910 with some entries in 1911. Her diary was recently acquired by the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library at the University of Alberta, but the author's biographical information and name are not known. Fortunately, the author of this diary mentions social engagements with Elsie Nowell and Fred Kent on two occasions. Both references are substantiated by corresponding entries in Nowell's diary where the latter confirms that on those dates, she and members of her family visited with the Jones family.[26] From this cross-reference, the unknown writer's frequent mention of Arthur and Frank can be matched to the *S.S. Lake Manitoba*'s passenger list to suggest that the diarist was a member of Nathanial Jones's family.[27] Written in a feminine hand, the Jones diary often refers to "the boys" to suggest that she is not male. She also speaks of "father and mother" which suggests that she is a junior female in the house.[28] Unfortunately, the *S.S. Lake Manitoba*'s passenger list does not mention if a daughter or a young wife came with this particular family; however, it is quite likely that female family members joined the main party in Canada after the men had established a homestead, as was often the case.[29]

The final diarist is a woman named Henrietta Bellward whose diaries date from September 24, 1903, to December 31, 1909. A typed transcript is located at the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library in the University of Alberta, but, unlike the other two diaries, a hand-written version is not available. The Bellward fonds are accompanied by some biographical information documented by Lyle in his bibliography. Henrietta

Bellward and her husband, Arthur, did not come to Canada with Barr's original party, but joined other British colonists at the Barr site in September, 1903. In her diary, she references a number of other colonists who were part of the Barr party; most notably, Mrs. Rendell and Mrs. Lloyd. Similar to the Nowell and the Jones diaries, Bellward's journal is also largely void of personal information.

As already stated, these diaries are characterized by a conservative writing style. The format is succinct and includes entries that move from lists or ledgers to descriptions of the weather to notes about neighbours who drop in for tea. The diarists record routine activities including housework, and all include information about the work done by some male, such as a husband, a brother, or a father. Critics such as Blodgett argue that female diarists avoid intimate disclosure in favour of a more neutral style because it enables them to "conform to [their gender's] penchant to be self-conscious, not just as writers but also as human beings of the secondary sex" (22). Yet this assertion does not allow for the full exploration of why these women write as they do since women from the Britannia colony write diaries at a time when a variety of formats have already been undertaken by other females. Tracing the evolution of the diary from the sixteenth century forward, Blodgett writes that "Englishwomen over the centuries kept diaries with four sorts of focus—travel, public events and persons, conscience, [and] personal memorabilia—beginning early to blend the latter two types" (23-24). Buss further explains that "by the late eighteenth century the diary was already a healthily eclectic genre, a form that would be extended and enriched by many English-speaking women coming to Canada" (*Mapping* 37). Certainly by the twentieth century, many British and Anglo-Canadian settler women had used the diary to record highly personal information.

Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, for example, Sara Welch Hill uses her diary as a place of refuge to record information about the physical abuse she receives from her husband: "Mr Hill called the girls, who got up, he swore at them *dreadfully* & then at me *ordering* me to get up with the most abusive language in which blasted b….h & c was repeatedly used not getting us with this insolent treatment he *kicked* me several times" (78).[30] A day later, Hill records her reaction: "I have not yet taken a meal with Mr Hill since he kicked me" (78). In 1901, Phoebe McInnes also uses a diary to vent her frustrations.[31] On March 14, McInnes admits that she "was very cross all day. Couldn't stand anything" (227). Later that week, McInnes indicates her understanding of the diary as a place of confession: "Since I last wrote, something has happened which I very much dislike to record but as this diary is supposed to contain all the events which have any bearing on my life, I suppose I must" (227). In 1907, about the time that Bellward, Jones, and Nowell write their diaries, Caroline Alice Porter uses her diary as a place to write an intensely emotional account of her loneliness. On November 16, 1907, Porter writes about the intense pain she experiences when "Lizzie and her family" move away (250). "It seemed some times that I could not bear it. All was so different without my girls. I think that I cried every day, and night too, for a long time ~~but finally I began to remember that it was as God wished it to be" (250).[32] These particular entries suggest that some women did record highly personal information in their diaries.

Dramatic disclosures of these kinds do not take place in the diaries belonging to this particular sampling of Britannia women. Of all the diarists, Bellward is most apt to acknowledge her emotions, although she maintains a characteristic reserve even throughout trying situations. Bellward admits, for example, that a letter from home

"upset me a little as it was the first letter I have had since I left England" (November 1, 1903). Where Porter admits that her loneliness is accompanied by tears, Bellward provides no further detail. The majority of her entries are much more understated than this one. When Bellward attends to the stillborn birth of a neighbour woman's child, her entry on that date simply reads: "Baby born 10:30 p.m. 'dead'" (April 19, 1906). The other Britannia diarists use a similar minimalist approach. With little advance warning, on June 20, 1912, Elsie Nowell suddenly writes: "Our wedding day." The closest Jones comes to articulating any type of emotional response is when, on one occasion, she mentions a family party where "beer and ale flowed freely" (November 24, 1910). Jones, however, does not provide an opinion on the matter or any further details.

There is even some evidence to suggest that Nowell works to expunge emotion from her diaries. Her earliest diary exists in two forms: one version contains three moments of emotion which, in the other version, are omitted.[33] Reasons for the deletions are unclear, although Cynthia Huff observes that "[British female] diarists often reread their journals and edited them" (xix). Huff also notes that, particularly among the middle-classes, "British children were encouraged by their parents to write diaries" (xxv). Parents or governesses monitored children's diaries with the belief that the young writers should learn to "recall past actions and hence learn to correct mistakes and use time wisely" (xxv). It is possible Nowell wrote under the tutelage of her mother, who encouraged her to practice a particular style, but no single reason can account for the reserved style common to all these diaries. The sparseness with which Nowell speaks about her marriage has its origins, in part, in Victorian modesty. Similarly, Bellward's abrupt mention of the deceased infant could be an attempt to "control [the emotional toll]

by minimizing the significance of [her] grief" (Rosenblatt 100-101). The ultra-conservative style of these diaries is of interest, given that many other British women who wrote diaries during the same time frame disclosed much about their personal lives. Despite their sparse quality, however, these Britannia diaries resonate with meaning when analyzed in the context of early twentieth-century imperialism.

Although many British women were openly supportive of expansionist aims, they often preferred to do their work from within the private sphere. Even females who promoted the cause by virtue of their membership in women's organizations such as the Victoria League and the Primrose League usually avoided the public eye. Part of the reason would have been due to the modesty associated with Victorian ideals; hence, Bush notes that these women's private practices were due as much to "social convention as to personal self-confidence" (80). Bush further states that "the evidence of diaries and letters shows the powerful influence of the former over the latter" (80). As this statement begins to demonstrate, life narratives such as diaries reveal the complex relationship these Britannia women had to imperialism. Indeed, it is through diaries that imperialism is best understood as a system that operated, not only from the public world governed by men, but in the private world where women did most of their work.

An important distinction needs to be made between diaries that writers intend to remain private versus those that are written with a public audience in mind. When the three Britannia women's diaries are considered in this context, it is found that they have the characteristics that Bloom uses to identify "truly private diaries as those bare-bones works written primarily to keep records of receipts and expenditures, the weather, 'visits to and from neighbours, or public occurrences of both the institutional and the sensational

sort'" (25). Such diaries, characterized by depictions of events from daily life such as "weather changes, harvest yields and the acquisitions of animals," are often written by women (Huff xxi). When contrasted with works that are written for a public—like those by Hiemstra, Rendell, and Topott—Bloom further elaborates that private diaries are "written … so that no reader outside the author's immediate society or household [can] understand them" in terms of context (25). In other words, these journals are free of devices such as "foreshadowing and flashbacks" that would provide background for an external audience (Bloom 29).

One might assume that intimate disclosure would be frequent in such works, yet even readers acquainted with these women would glean little personal information from their journals, which indicates that this particular sampling of Britannia women did not view their diaries as wholly private. Indeed, Nowell, Jones, and Bellward write as if they expect their diaries to be read by members of the immediate household. Space constraints certainly made a lack of privacy a factor. Bellward's first months in Canada were, for example, spent in a tent until a "until a log cabin…was completed" (Lyle 36). The tents, shacks, soddies, and cabins that families resided in during the early years of the colonies did not afford much privacy. Bowen notes that, many times, Britannia men shared the first home with one or more other men—perhaps a brother or business partner—making "privacy a scarce commodity" for the female members of the household (185). Whether or not family members or some other member of the community read these particular diaries is not known, nor is it relevant. The point is that the presence of a potential audience shapes the construction of any life narrative whether written for public or private consumption; thus, Bloom rightly identifies a trait associated with private diaries,

remarking that when "such readers lurk at the writer's elbow, welcome or not, there is no way to rule out self-censorship" (24). Understood this way, it is not a surprise that Bellward underemphasizes the death of a child, since that death might signify to others a woman's failure to live up to her responsibility to bear a healthy infant. Similarly, if a diarist anticipates readers, she would not want to leave a record of any complaints or misgivings that she might harbour about her roles as a wife and mother, or about her living conditions. This concept ties into the points made earlier, where it is argued that Britannia women came to Canada at a volatile period when women had to carefully negotiate many conflicting social expectations. I would like to suggest that these particular Britannia women work within the confines of censorship to construct diaries which record their practical kinds of work done on behalf of the empire. The possibility that the diaries were written for practical purposes has already been raised when I suggest that Nowell appears to have been educated to remove her emotions from her journal.

Practicality is a key concept in the context of British expansionism. Bush argues that during the early part of the twentieth century, "the most frequently noted characteristic of women's imperial work was that it was 'practical'" (74). "Visible results, efficiency, and attention to detail," continues Bush, "were qualities which were much prized by the lady imperialists across a full spectrum of their work" (74). For example, Bellward, Nowell, and Jones each devote at least one section of their diaries to maintain some type of list that is of practical use to the writer or, in turn, the household at large. Nowell makes room for a list of mailing addresses belonging to friends and family, while Bellward's diary begins with an inventory of various household furnishings that she appears to have sold, or perhaps purchased from, other women.[34] Of the three

diarists included in this study, it is Jones who makes greatest use of such a format. Throughout her diary, there are many records of business transactions. Sometimes these notes are simple ones such as "Bought sow from Rackham and Smith" (February 18, 1911). A typical page in Jones's journal includes any number of important entries in the margins; for example, in June, 1910, Jones writes that some member of the household "Paid bank $200 and lien note $135; Paid H Miller $3; Paid $4.75." Many longer ledgers detailing financial transactions are built directly into Jones's daily entries. For instance, on February 23, 1910, she writes:

Paid	Hay Knife	.90
	Rasp	.15
	Tobacco	1.25
	Baby's shoes	.20
	...	
	Rendell	2.75
	(?) Johnson	50.00 chq.
	J.S. Phillipotts	58.00 chq.

That Jones keeps this particular kind of diary is significant since, by doing so, she gains a measure of equality as a stakeholder in the farm. Catherine Motherwell, who wrote numerous articles for the *Grain Grower's Guide* about the art of "domestic bookkeeping," argued that "a good bookkeeper…is well on her way to an equal partnership with her husband in the family enterprise" (qtd. in Women's Institutes..., *Legacy* 3). Since it satisfies a practical objective, the financial diary becomes one of the ways a British woman could understand herself as supportive of imperial advancement

from within the household. Describing the mindset in expansionist Britain, McClintock argues that "rationality in its nineteenth-century form was its single-minded dedication to the principles of capital accumulation" (168). This way of thinking persisted throughout the century to shape household practices: "By the mid-nineteenth century, what Barthes calls the 'sensual pleasure in classification' ruled domestic space—[including]…the regular accounting of stocks, [and]…the strict keeping of account books" (McClintock 168). Noting that "the full expansion of imperial commerce was not possible without elaborate systems of rational accounting…organized around the abstract medium of money," McClintock points out that "the domestic realm…became an indispensable arena for the creation, nurturance and embodiment of these values" (168). Jones provides a particularly solid example of one of the practical ways that a Britannia woman uses her diary to contribute to this type of imperial advancement in the colony.

Although they also include lists and ledgers in their diaries, Bellward and Nowell focus more on work such as laundry and cleaning the home. In the imperial context, this type of labour is also important. According to McClintock, in Britain, an "increasingly disciplined [and] obsessive tidying and ordering" had come to be required of the domestic space (168). Britannia women use their diaries to record their own attention to such details in their Canadian homes. The week of October 10, 1904, was a busy one for Bellward: "Mon. 10th Sewed all day. Tu. 11 – Washed. W. 12 Ironed. Thu. 13 Busy all day. F. 14 Ditto." Nowell also reveals her dedication to the maintenance of the home: "August 19, 1909, Cleaned bedrooms out." "August 21, 1909, Cleaned all the silver." "August 27, 1909, Busy cleaning."

Certainly part of the reason that Britannia women wrote brief entries is because they had little time to compose substantive ones; indeed, the sparseness with which they wrote signifies that, in reality, not much time was available to keep a journal. Access to water was but one factor that added a degree of difficulty to domestic work. Bellward records, on at least one occasion, that she is "very short of water" (August 24, 1904). Nowell frequently writes that her fiancé, Fred Kent, took trips to the gully "to haul water" that she and her mother would have been responsible to carry throughout the house as they cooked meals, cleaned, and managed sanitation in the home (February 21, 1909). Moreover, the majority of the Britannia colonists' first homes were constructed from poplar logs which, once cut and assembled, tended to shrink. As a result, homes were not sealed against dust or pests; nor were they insulated against the cold, meaning that an ongoing supply of wood had to be tracked indoors. The water situation combined with the home's rugged construction would have meant that domestic tasks took hours to complete, making the pristine cleanliness prized in British culture difficult to achieve.

Despite these difficulties, the diarists do not emphasize that their work is demanding or unpleasant. This trait is curious until one considers that imperialism produced a milieu where Britannia women would have felt particularly conflicted about having to do domestic work. Indeed, Britannia women would have been aware of a negative stigma which existed in relation to domestic work in Britain. Traditionally, to be a doer of this kind of work identified one as a member of the lower classes and, as Hammerton points out, in Britain, "many women tried to hide the fact that they performed hard manual work, and tried to give a false impression of fashionable dressed idleness" (*Emigrant Gentlewomen* 114). As the push to encourage women to emigrate

increased in its intensity, a move was certainly underway to counter such notions; in fact, some sought to applaud settler women for their domestic contributions. Thus Rendell is proud of the fact that she works hard when she writes, "I would never advise anyone to come out here who is the least afraid of work" (January 19, 1904). Her letters challenge her fellow Britons to stop "plodding and 'hibernating'" and take up settlement life in the colony where women and men of quality and endurance are sure to succeed (January 19, 1904). Rendell addresses readers back in Britain to encourage emigration and this empowers her to identify herself as a woman of excellence who surmounts challenges to achieve success in Canada. But her strategy does not mean she is any less concerned about establishing herself as a woman of the refined class. Even if the "genteel women could draw the implication that menial work need bring no loss of caste provided it was not done in Britain," it is nonetheless logical to assume that the move to do domestic work in Canada and elsewhere would have been accompanied by some women's enduring anxieties about what the performance of that work signified in terms of class standing (Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen* 114).

Britannia women were among those British women who had to reconcile disparate ideas about what domestic work signified in terms of class. While a move to Canada provided British women with the opportunity to transcend the class stigma that had followed them in the homeland, much was at stake when it came to depicting themselves as doers of that work. According to McClintock, "for decades, it was widely assumed that the visible sign of the Victorian middle-class housewife was the sign of leisure" (161). Bellward and Nowell in particular convey an impression of leisure, not by stating that they did no work, but by juxtaposing that work with mannerly social

occasions. Bellward capably alternates between work and leisure, writing that, on May 12, 1904, she "turned everything out of the house and dried them. Did not finish until tea time." A similar entry is found in Nowell's diary: "Finished all the cleaning and had everything straight by tea time" (August 20, 1909). Nowell's diary in particular validates my claim that the women want to convey an appearance of leisure. A trip to England she takes with her mother serves as the strongest evidence. Despite the fact that the young woman's entries are somewhat longer than usual—she devotes some space to describe England's sights—the types of activities she describes herself doing while on vacation are not dissimilar to many she does on the prairies, including social calls.

To establish themselves as individuals of an upward social status in Canada, it was certainly appropriate that Britannia women use their diaries to depict themselves doing household work such as cleaning and laundry; however, it is noteworthy that the diarists do not emphasize the length of time—or the degree of effort—required to accomplish this work. Rather they use a sparse narrative style to seamlessly juxtapose notations about domestic chores with records of their social activities, such as visits with neighbours, church socials, and teas. This blending of labour and leisure is present in all the diaries in this study and suggests that Britannia women were determined to demonstrate their competence in the domestic sphere, but that they also classified socialization—whether at community functions or from inside the home—as a legitimate part of that work.

The effect is a style that mutes the realities associated with domestic labour, while producing a refined tone with depictions of events such as teas and socials. In an essay titled "The Role in the Establishment of Social Status in Early Upper Canada," Katherine

McKenna finds it remarkable that "although Elizabeth Simcoe spent much of her time living in tents, she regularly held tea parties and entertained her visitors with evenings of whist" (182). Britannia women were not part of an elite class in the same way the wife of Canada's first Lieutenant Governor would have been. However, like the upper-class women McKenna discusses, Britannia women also write as if they had "a social obligation to entertain" (183). The obligation is felt due to imperial forces that have indoctrinated British society with ideas about what constitutes acceptable women's work in the colonies. Included among those forces is Barr who, in his Christmas pamphlet, advises the colonists to "maintain that social advantage of our British settlement" (22). Frequent interaction among friends and neighbours is, by Barr's estimation, of greatest value when it occurs among members of the "Mother or Fatherland" (22). Additionally, Barr states that community life is beneficial "for women especially" (22). His statement implies that women in his colony will play a key role in organizing social activities for the entire community.

Social events tended to involve visits to and from neighbours and, if such activities were thought to benefit women, it bears mentioning that there would have been nothing easy about the work required to facilitate these gatherings. An extended quotation by Bellward serves as an example:

> Arthur went out in the morning and shot a duck. Cecil came over to dinner. Arthur and I went for a lovely walk in the afternoon. Harold Huxley came over to tea. Mr. Gee not well all day but came over in the evening. Monday 26th A lovely day. Sewed all day. Tue 27 Washed curtains for the first time and ironed them. Cooked the duck, for dinner,

> was very nice. Kitty over all day slept here. Wed. 28th Ironed, Kitty went home in the morning. Thu. 29 Busy all day sewing, a lovely day. (September 25-29, 1904)

During this week, Bellward states that she had company to dinner, visitors for tea—one of whom was ill— and at least one overnight guest. In addition to her already substantial workload—which would have entailed hauling and heating the water to do laundry and to cook— Bellward would have been responsible to prepare extra food for meals, bake, clear up after guests, and be hospitable, all inside a restricted home space. Despite these demands, she does not indicate that the production of these leisure activities requires any particular effort. The same is true of Jones who also makes careful record of social engagements but without reference to any of the work that is associated with entertaining: "July 17, 1910, Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson to dinner and supper." "August 9, 1910, Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins to tea." "October 23, 1910, Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Holtby to supper."

The tone of the diaries suggests that the writers see visits as opportunities to retain cultural practices with fellow persons from the homeland. Although this custom is not unique to the British, it does have a link to imperial ideology. Citing Ellen Joyce, Bush points us to the British belief that "western Canada needed 'women of some culture…who will keep up the tone of the men with whom they mix by music and book-love when the day's work is over'" (159). All of the diarists in this study perform hospitality rituals and, by doing so, fulfill the role of civilizer as they encourage refined behaviours. Jones documents that "W.M. [?] May [came] to supper and then with the boys to G.G. Meeting: afterwards played bridge. Lent May 'Captain's All'" (March 9, 1910). [35] On October 20, 1903, shortly after their arrival in Canada, Bellward makes a

point of recording how she and her husband kept civilized customs as they stop to seek lodging while on the trek to the homestead: "Arthur and I went for a walk, and enjoyed it very much...then back into the house and sang hymns. Next Monday we started for our land." On February 17, 1909, Nowell "had McBarnes and friend over to tea, music in the evening."

The idea that women provide a support network for men is of particular importance in terms of the diaries' functions as objects for practical purposes. Settler women in western Canada were, according to Sandra Rollings-Magnusson, responsible to help men "overcome both the physical and emotional hardships of building a new life under difficult circumstances" (3). This type of example occurs most often in Nowell's diary where the writer often provides companionship to Kent while he performs farm work. On February 19, 1909, she writes that she "went down the Gully with Fred again." Tuesday, November 28, 1911, was a similar day: "Fred and I went into M. to fetch the sleigh out." While the two undoubtedly enjoy each other's company, the diary is also the place where Nowell records her work; in this instance, her task is to assist with the farm work by virtue of the companionship she provides.

Another related objective is to chronicle the work of men. Once again, passages from Nowell's journal serve as an example:

> Tuesday, March 2, 1909: Nice morning, Lawrie took two loads of grain into Marshall, Fred gone to Rutherfords to see about seed oats. I walked down to Listers in aft.
>
> Wednesday, March 3, 1909: Boxer sprained himself last night. Rather colder, Lister moved his house, had four ox teams on; Lawrie at Gully

> Church all day, helping to raise it. Fred hauled water in morning then drove mother over to M in cutter after dinner....
>
> Thurs 4th: Wind from E. Fred and Lawrie gone to Rutherfords for load of oats.

Jones also fills a substantial portion of her diary this way. In January, 1910, she introduces the New Year stating that "Charles and Arthur made several journeys over the Gully during the month for firewood (8 loads)." She continues in this pattern throughout 1910: "May 4, Arthur finished seeding oats at Frank's. Total 36 acres." Later she writes, "August 12, Frank to town with cream. Charles mowing. Arthur hauling hay. 6 loads."

By comparison, Bellward's diary includes fewer entries that focus exclusively on men—probably because her husband was often away from the homestead—but she still acknowledges her husband's work on the farm. On January 12, 1904, Bellward writes: "Arthur and the boys went all day, felling trees." She continues such notations over the course of several years: "May 19, 1907 Arthur on the homestead all day." "November 24, 1907 Arthur went to the homestead, got back 3:30." That each woman uses her journal to record the work done by men is significant in the context of imperial ideology. Citing a 1902 publication titled *The Imperial Colonist,* Bush speaks of Britons' belief that "Canada was 'waiting for the presence of women to make it possible for men to anchor themselves to the land'" (159). When they write about men at work on homesteads, the diarists create records confirming how men are, in fact, making progress on Canadian soil. Their work is to prepare records that serve as a useful reminder of work that is completed on certain dates. This effort is a supportive one in that it can be consulted by

the men themselves as a reminder of activities such as seeding dates; moreover, as they prepare such entries, women honour men's work.

The preparation of these records is, in and of itself, a form of labour, particularly given how much women already did to organize hospitality, and to perform other kinds of domestic work. Earlier I suggest that the diarists use their journals to subtly classify leisure activities as part of their labour. The result is that their manual labours become underrepresented. Thus the question is asked as to why the women would choose to represent their work in this way. Part of the reason, as argued, is due to the class connotations; women stood to gain a measure of cultural capital as they created diaries with a refined and mannerly tone. But apart from imparting a particular kind of tone, the practice of blending leisure into labour establishes equality between social outings and manual work thereby using the process of association to justify the time spent on leisure.

Justification is necessary given that the "distances between neighbours over primitive trails, [made] contact between homesteads a major undertaking" (Rollings-Magnusson 2). Even though many of the townships settled by members of this group were only a few miles apart, the colonists had to travel by horse and wagon over poor roads and in severe weather. As the women write about their visits, thereby recording them alongside other kinds of work, they document a rationale for socializing. Nowell creates this impression when she combines a social outing with a homestead task: for example, during an excursion to Marshall, she and mother "take Mr. B a bag of oats" (May 10, 1911). On August 13, 1911, Nowell has a "lovely day" when she "[went] to Birds for scales." If one recalls how Nowell often accompanies Fred to haul water, a pattern emerges whereby women are able to use social networking as a legitimate way of

leaving their own home spaces. Indeed, just as she plays hostess to visitors, each of the diarists documents herself going outside her home to visit. On April 8, 1904, Bellward went to Lloydminster with Mr. Gee, presumably to do errands: "It was a lovely day, went down to the house and got dinner for the boys. Then Mab. and I to Miller's stores, then to Mrs. Gay's and had a pleasant afternoon." Jones speaks less frequently of being off the farm than she does of receiving visitors; however, there are notations that confirm social outings were of importance to members of the household: "All to church and then to S. Nowell's for tea" (April 17, 1911).

It is also significant that, on October 25, 1910, Jones records that, "Mother and Mrs. [?] Williamson [have] a tata." Listed alongside activities that included sodding the stable and hauling hay, she assigns value to the fact that the mother participates in a visit with another woman. Elsewhere Jones assesses that July 12, 1910, is a "good day" and goes on to explain that "Mother stayed with Mrs. Lyle." The provision of companionship to other women is also a type of activity that Britannia females would define as a form of hospitality work since, by doing so, they justified opportunities for interactions with other women. Much is at stake in this representation. The social problems faced by settler women are well documented by researchers such as Eliane Silverman who recounts how many suffered "nervous breakdowns because of the loneliness and hardships" (166). Joan Champ confirms this statement stating that "isolation was a problem for farm women in Saskatchewan...[and] unless they were lucky enough to live within driving distance of a church, there were little opportunities for women to meet with each other" (n. pag.). Graulich similarly concludes that "isolation is increased by the western way of life, where frequent moves and distant neighbours made bonds difficult to establish"

(116). The implications of such difficulties were obvious to many even at the time in which the colony is organized. Consequently, Barr acknowledges that "hardships and even privation may be cheerfully borne when the friends that are dear are present to cheer and comfort" (Barr pamphlet, Christmas 22). By recording the time they spend with other women—whether it is to assist with a maternity case or to attend to one another during illness—these women create a record of altruistic work among their other activities.

Of the three accounts, it is Bellward who provides most insight into the support systems women could create with altruistic service. Bellward's earliest entries—while characteristically sparse—convey considerable anxiety about her departure from England and her subsequent arrival in an unfamiliar place. She writes: "Left England…feeling rather sad" (September 24, 1903). A subsequent entry indicates that Bellward became "rather frightened" when, during the journey to the homestead site, she and her husband get lost (October 10, 1903). It is only at the point that she makes social contact with another woman that Bellward begins to adapt to life in Canada. While on the trek, she writes of a stop at the home of another settler family: "Tuesday October 20, 1903: Mrs. H. was very kind to us, [and] gave us a good dinner chicken pie and a good cup of tea, which we all needed and enjoyed very much; for the next two days, Mabel and I had a good wash up [and] I learnt to make butter and pluck prairie chicken."

Once established on her own homestead, Bellward continues to draw support from her exchanges with other women. Alice Rendell is mentioned frequently throughout Bellward's diaries and it is clear that these women provide one another with a significant amount of support. When the Bellward "baby fell off [the] bed," it was "Mrs. R. [who] stayed the day" to help nurse the infant (July 29-30, 1907). When "Mrs. Rendell had her

teeth out, [Bellward] was with her all the time" (March 4, 1907). Examples such as these ones demonstrate how these particular women use their diaries to record acts of altruism and for them, this work was an imperial activity. As Bush notes, "altruism was… solidly built into the activities of female imperialism, and firmly drilled into the psyche of individual imperialists as a moral imperative, if not a dominating code of daily life" (76). As women help one another to survive on the homesteads, they foster an environment in which all members of the Britannia community will survive and the diary provides a space in which the women depict themselves doing this work.

Perhaps the greatest evidence that Britannia women successfully use leisure to counter some of the difficulties associated with settlement life is the lack of emotion in the diaries. On October 10, 1909, Nowell writes: "Shared Miss Dodson's bed last night and had a good old talk." Although Nowell omits this entry in one version of her diary, its initial presence confirms the level of intimacy that existed between settler women. Ironically, the support that women drew from one another would have meant that they needed to rely less on their diaries as outlets for emotion. One need only recall that it is when Sarah Porter finds herself without the company of other women that she turns to the diary to record her tears. Steven Kagle and Lorenza Gramegna argue that "the diary not only offered an outlet for tension through private expression, but provided an opportunity to alter or remove the source of tension. By manipulating reality in a diary, [diarists] could sometimes create the illusion of control, lessen the sensation of risk, or make their restricted situation seem more satisfying" (43). Britannia women use their diaries to depict their control over the domestic sphere, including the coordination of social activities with other women, even with their unemotional entries.

Ultimately, the diary becomes a medium by which each of these Britannia women comes to represent herself in a number of ways. Each shows herself to be a helpmeet as she records information about men's work and as she chronicles important events such as the date that crops are seeded. The concept of *auto/biography* as summarized by Rak is helpful in this context. According to Rak, "the slash highlights the instability of autobiography as a genre, and expresses a continuum rather than an area of absolute difference between biography and autobiography" (*Autobiography in Canada* 16). As they write about the progress that men make on the homestead, Bellward, Nowell, and Jones each create a biography about her respective family's success in western Canada as well as a representation of herself. Furthermore, as she prepares lists and ledgers that outline financial transactions, the diarist represents herself as a contributor to the homestead which enables her to establish her own link to land ownership.

The women acknowledge work done in the domestic sphere such as cooking and cleaning, but they also depict their participation in leisure and write of those activities as though they are labour. Evidence of this claim occurs by observing each diarist's careful tracking of the visits she attends or hosts. The organization of leisure activities is what marks each writer as a woman of class and refinement, as does the act of composing a diary. In her research into women's diaries, Margo Culley concludes that, as early as the "end of the nineteenth century, diary keeping...became associated with gentility [and]... a modicum of leisure [is one of] the strongest determinants of who did and did not keep journals" (4). Historically, then, as Kathryn Carter notes, journals "marked women of leisure and [were] regarded as a conventional habit among people of culture, associated with a genteel life and an ideology of refinement" (15). In other words, as Philippe

Lejeune notes, even "before becoming a text, the private diary is a *practice*" (187). The voices in these three diaries are, at all times, polite; moreover, the construction of each diary conveys the impression that Britannia women had spare time to record what went on around them. Of course, this representation is an exaggerated one given the amount of work that each of these women performs; however, McClintock's assertion that the presentation of "idleness was …a laborious and time-consuming *character role* performed by [British] women who wanted membership in a 'respectable' class" suggests that the diarists are conscious of the images they portray of themselves (61). This idea is counter to Bloom's claim that authors of private diaries "give little or no concern with authorial image; it emerges unwittingly from the materials" (27). Given that these women are part of an emigration scheme founded on imperial values, it is reasonable to assume that they are conscious of themselves as imperial subjects as they compose their journals.

Britannia women accomplish a number of imperial objectives when they use their diaries to record their work. Altruism, their work as helpmeets, the organization of hospitality and leisure events, and the recording of progress on the farm are all activities that have a relationship to imperial goals and objectives because they assist with the colony's survival. This point is not to suggest that the enactment of these customs and practices are the specific claim of the British. Indeed, any number of ethnic groups participated in similar forms of community-building when, as settlers, they struggled to survive in the new homeland. Despite the fact that they were not particularly unique in their coping strategies, these diarists actively work to define the scope of women's work in the colony in ways that enable them to better survive settler life, and they do so in alignment with the homeland's objectives.

Chapter Four

"To My Daughter who is a Canadian… I Dedicate these Reminiscences." Imperial Transition as Reflected in Britannia Women's Short Memoirs[36]

The diaries suggest that Britannia women countered isolation and homesickness by virtue of the fact that British imperial ideology encouraged social interactions among members of their own ethnic group. Within these group activities, altruism and hospitality work were of particular importance as was the act of writing the diary to record progress on the homestead. While it is possible to link these activities to imperialism, more evidence is needed to evaluate the degree to which Britannia women practice these customs in the name of Empire. To what extent are these women legitimately committed to the expansion of Britain? Does the representation of leisure as labour mark a subtle form of resistance that enables women to move away from imperial rule, or does it signal their commitment to transplanting the Empire? The portrayal of leisure as labour could, from the diarists' perspectives, be a move to develop images of themselves as capable, yet refined domestics; a representation that corresponds with Britain's imperial aims. Yet the emphasis on leisure can also be understood as a way that women break free of constraints the British homeland imposes, particularly when they use their social activities to justify time spent outside their houses.

Such questions are important to critics who study imperialism, including Levine who urges researchers to "explore how the different roles ascribed to…women affected the course of imperial history" over time (Introduction ix). Britannia women's memoirs are useful when compared to life narratives written at the earliest points in the colony's history—in this instance diaries by Nowell, Bellward, and Jones as well as Alice

Rendell's letters—because the memoirs reflect women's transitions from imperial subjects to Canadian ones. Such an analysis provides insight into ways that these women attempt to transplant Britain's values into communities and, by extension, how those ideals become transformed in the new nation. The conclusion I draw is that these Britannia women understand the domestic to be an imperial space and, while they find freedom over time to adjust the tone of their rhetoric to articulate more forceful, confident representations of themselves, they do continue to embrace the image of women as helpmeets, mothers, and the transmitters of British culture. This latter example, in particular, suggests that Britannia women's commitment to the homeland remains strong.

The most common type of life narrative to surface throughout this search for Britannia women's life writing has been the short memoir. I use the term *short memoir* to delineate these documents from Hiemstra's memoirs which are book length and published by a prominent publishing company. Britannia women's short memoirs range from two or three pages to longer versions of forty or fifty pages. If published, these documents are most often found in community history books or in local newspapers. If housed in repositories, there is usually limited information available about the acquisition and the author other than what is included in the manuscript itself. The majority of these short memoirs include an overview of the group's departure from London, some mention of the ocean voyage, talk of the infamous Barr scheme, an overview of the journey or trek to the homestead and, finally, a summation of events that take place in the colony during the first months or year, including descriptions about how the "green" English manage to triumph in their new homeland.

Close study of these patterns, however, reveals, on the whole, a somewhat casual approach to detail. Even information about the number of colonists and the date of departure varies from one account to the next. An unknown female writer of a memoir titled "Pioneering in Western Canada," states that "on the 31st day of March 1903, our family was in a party of 2500 English men, women, and children to set sail from England for Canada. The 'Lake Manitoba' had been engaged to bring the immigrants over, but was chartered to hold only 2000" (1). Catherine Jones begins her memoir with a similar statement: "the Barr party set sail from Liverpool on March 31, 1903, on the boat 'Lake Manitoba'… [with] 2500 passengers on board" (1). Kate Lilian Dodd (née Truscott) estimates that "2684 persons" sailed aboard the *S.S. Lake Manitoba* (3). Her total is consistent with a number provided by the Reverend George Exton Lloyd. Yet Lloyd's wife, Marion, guesses conservatively that "fifteen hundred men, women and children" sailed to Canada aboard that ship (1) while Ethel Sanderson writes that "eleven hundred adults and five hundred children" were passengers (1). Sanderson adds that she left for Canada with Barr's primary party "in April 1903" but most accounts state that the date was March 31, 1903 (1). Clara Causley (née Williams), who traveled to the colony with a later party, admits that she does not remember each detail with precision: "We finally landed at St. Johns or Quebec. I've forgotten which" (1).

Concerns about the reliability of memory are compounded with the knowledge that many of these memoirs are written several decades after the formation of the Britannia colony took place. Truscott, for example, wrote her memoir in 1976, more than seventy years after the 1903 arrival of the primary Barr colonist party, of which she and her family were a part.[37] Causley narrated her "story when she was 81 years old in 1975"

(8). Ethel Sanderson came to Canada as part of the primary Barr party with her parents, "two sisters Dorothy and Mabel and Mary, an old friend of the family" (1). Dates mentioned in Sanderson's memoir confirm that she wrote approximately sixty years later.[38] Mary Wilkinson recorded her memoir approximately forty years after her arrival in Canada.[39] Marion Lloyd wrote her memoir at some point after her husband's death in 1940. Hiemstra and Topott also told their stories many years after the events of which they speak.

To assume that the inconsistencies found in the memoirs under analysis in this section are the product of the authors' advanced ages is not a satisfactory approach. In her essay titled "Simone de Beauvoir: Aging and Its Discontents," Kathleen Woodward rightly cautions readers of autobiographical narratives against ageism, stating that it is dangerous to "project onto old age in general the attitudes, beliefs, and texture of mind that may be idiosyncratic to us as individuals" (101). Nor is it appropriate to suggest that the casual rendering of facts is unique to women, because Britannia men's narratives also contain inconsistencies. Pick writes that "two thousand all-British Barr colonists" came to Canada (xi) while McCormick writes that the colonists "numbered over two-thousand" (*Lloydminster* 38). As stated, the Reverend Lloyd writes that there were "2684 souls on board" but admits room for error when he adds, "where I got that I do not know now" (8). The most important point to emerge when reading these narratives is, not that the quantitative facts differ across several narratives, but that almost all of colonists—whether female or male—tell stories that follow a similar format. Thus it is sensible to argue that the authors use narrative patterns to participate in a community dialogue about the colony. If the diaries suggest that women worked hard to build and develop

communities, the memoirs suggest that the establishment of the community was a success. More important, the memoirs demonstrate that ongoing participation in that community remains important, even decades after the fact.

Hertha Sweet Wong states that "community has to do with having something in common: shared residence in a specific locality; shared interests; shared history; shared political structure" (172). Britannia colonists—both women and men—wrote in ways that reflect their shared experience or knowledge of the emigration scheme, hardships, culture, and ethnicity. Beyond any androgynous commonalities, one of the primary objectives of these female memoirists is to accentuate the work that Britannia women did in the colony; hence, as Buss argues of memoirists in general, each writer seeks to "place her personal story in the context of its communal location and her research is limited by that need" (*Repossessing* 18-19). This point is crucial. It is not necessary that each writer know with flawless precision the numbers of colonists or the exact date of departure, so long as the she can demonstrate her participation in that community by virtue of positioning herself in relation to such events. Acknowledgement of the Barr scheme and/or the first months of life in the colony signal the writers' membership in the community but, ultimately, these narratives shift into more personal accounts of women's work and their triumphs over hardships as they perform that work. This outcome differs from the one achieved by the diarists who speak cautiously about their work in Canada. The shift in style confirms that the women in this study achieved progress from within the Britannia colony—where they initially downplay their labour and their difficulties—to become citizens in a nation where women continue to acquire increased autonomy as evidenced by stronger, more decisive voices that emerge in these memoirs.

There are different degrees to which the various women express this transition. The most conservative approach is taken by Catherine Jones, who appears to be related to the Jones who wrote the diary. As already outlined, the Jones diary includes a number of men's names that can be linked back to Nathanial Jones's family within the ship's records. The Jones memoir—signed by Mrs. Frank Jones—suggests similar connections. Returning to the analysis of Jones's voice in her memoir, one of the most significant observations to be made is her dedication. On the final page of the transcript, a handwritten note appears to explain that the narrative has been "related by Catherine Jones Mrs. Frank Jones to E.A. Jones my younger son," suggesting that the purpose of the memoir is to record a family's history. Since Smith and Watson correctly indicate that an autobiography can be a medium by which "individuals participate in the shared communal recollection of the family's stories as rituals that reinforce familial history and the very idea of the family itself," it is clear that Jones sees it as her obligation to bind the family together by recounting this particular story about her family's men (*Reading Autobiography* 51). Similar to the diarists, one of the key reasons that Britannia women compose memoirs is so that descendants will have a record of the family's accomplishments. In the case of the Catherine Jones memoir, it is significant that the content is intended for a son.

A mere three pages, Catherine Jones's memoir is almost entirely comprised of the tropes found throughout narratives about the Britannia colony. As stated elsewhere, Catherine provides information about the date of departure and the ship. She introduces "the Rev. I.M. Barr as the originator of the idea," and she briefly describes the *S.S. Lake Manitoba*'s "eventful passage," as well as the "three train loads of people" that went to

Saskatoon (1). The memoir is characterized by the narrator's almost exclusive focus on the experiences of the father, two uncles, and grandfather who "came out with the Barr party" (1). Catherine Jones discusses a female relative only once when she explains how Grandma Jones's first interaction with Doukhobor women resulted in a tense moment. Having obtained shelter at a Doukhobor farm during the trek to the homestead, Grandma Jones was startled when some of the women, fascinated with her British apparel, gathered to watch her get dressed. Such episodes constitute a trope in their own right, since many of the Britannia colonists—and other British settlers—include in their life narratives descriptions of their first encounters with Doukhobor people. The ways in which the colonists depict non-British peoples will be touched upon later. For now, what is noteworthy is Jones's absence from the memoir. Indeed, she depicts herself as a character in her narrative only once. Having just described how her male family members construct a log house, she abruptly states: "That was where they were living when I came out" (3). This statement concludes her narrative.

Jones reinforces the common belief that men are central to the telling of history. Since she was not part of the primary Barr party—the patriarchy associated with the founding of the colony—she cannot include herself in the story that has come to be the accepted telling of these events. For such reasons, Mary Jean Corbett writes that the memoir is a "peculiarly appropriate form for a woman because it allows her either to be silent about herself…or to narrate the self by indirection" (258). Catherine's presence, or participation, is still implied through the act of writing as she records the accomplishments of her male relatives for her son. While the Jones men are central to the family's history, she is the teller of that history and this transmission of the family story

is her maternal contribution. Her actions are consistent with the argument of Bella Brodzki that "the mother *engenders* subjectivity through language; she is the primary source of speech and love. And part of the maternal legacy is the conflation of the two" (157). Indeed, Catherine Jones defines herself as a loyal wife and prudent mother when she guides her son to identify with his patriarchal lineage. This self-depiction that Jones portrays can be aligned with certain psychoanalytic theories as described by Susan Stanford Friedman, which stipulate that "during the Oedipal phase, the boy learns to...identify with his father and separate himself from his mother" (77). Understood from this perspective, it is not a surprise that Jones fosters the connection between father and son.

While I have suggested that Catherine Jones represents herself through the act of narration, it remains to be demonstrated how her memoir reflects her transition to a more powerful voice. Jones's positioning of herself in the narrative is key to interpreting her text; a point that is substantiated by reference to critical work done by Buss who states that any memoir should have a combination of three voices. The first is "that of the participant, the central protagonist in a story, the one who acts, is acted upon, who senses and feels and attempts to process the stimuli" (*Repossessing* 16). Catherine's participation as a character in the memoir is limited to the last line, where she writes that she arrives in Canada. The second voice that Buss mentions is "that of the witness, who observes and records the actions of others from a particular and localized viewpoint in the past time of the action" (*Repossessing* 16). Jones functions primarily as a witness when she recounts the story of the Jones patriarchs. Finally, Buss suggests that the memoirist must include "the reflective/reflexive consciousness, which, working from a writing time

distant from the events portrayed, supplies various contexts" (*Repossessing* 16). It is the latter voice that is most associated with the transition from a cautious voice to a more confident one, and the voice that is most difficult to discern in Jones's memoir. Nonetheless, I want to argue that this reflexive voice is present in an important and meaningful way.

When Jones chooses to position herself as a teller of a story rather than a visible participant, she positions herself primarily from the witness position. Indeed, she is a second-party witness, as it is clear that her rendition of the Barr story and her family's emigration is based on stories she has heard elsewhere. When Jones mentions the Barr voyage, for example, she bases her narrative on outside knowledge. The result is a somewhat formulaic work. As Buss points out, when a narrator "retreats too often to the safety of the witness, the memoir loses its impact, its immediacy, its sense of risk taking" (*Repossessing* 17). To find ultimate meaning in such instances, Nancy Miller encourages a practice which she refers to as overreading, which is to "read women's writing not 'as if it had already been read', but as if it had never been read; as *if* for the first time" (83). Overreading reminds the reader to consider the text apart from the established patterns found in the Britannia colony's historical narrative to expose the individual author apart from that group. It enables the reader to see how the narrator of "The Jones Story" constructs an image of a world in which women acquire property rights. In her introduction, Catherine writes that "each man, head of a family or bachelor, was entitled to 160 acres of land on a payment of $10.00" (1). Towards the end of her narrative, Jones digresses briefly from talk about the past to mention that Samuel Nowell's farm has, in the present day, been taken over by "Lois Kent, his granddaughter" (3).[40] Her

speech slips suddenly from a distant past into the present to reflect a transition and the arrival of social change. In this moment, her voice becomes a reflective one that "provides a shunt to a personal, which is also a political truth" (Buss *Repossessing* 17). Although Jones reinforces the patriarchy in her narrative, she does not accept that structure as absolute. Viewed in this way, this minimal detail has resonance. Its inclusion in a memoir of such short duration suggests that it is a point of extreme significance to the speaker and that she wishes to convey its importance to her audience—in this case, a son. Jones uses a standard telling of the Barr story to frame her family history as she seeks to teach her son about his lineage. Although this story favours men's perspectives, she begins to rewrite Britannia history to include women as property managers.

If a narrative written from a mother to a son takes a particular format, it stands to reason that a mother writing to a daughter might take another. This observation has already been made of the Hiemstra memoir in which the author bases much of her narrative on her mother's opinions and observations of settler life. Hiemstra, however, does not write for a daughter; rather, she assumes the role of daughter throughout her memoir. Yet if Smith and Watson are correct that "the mother identifies anticipatorily" with the daughter, there is particular significance in exploring a Britannia memoir in which a mother dedicates her reminiscence to a daughter (*Women, Autobiography, Theory* 17). Mary Wilkinson's narrative suits this purpose. Like the Jones narrative, the Wilkinson memoir also includes a dedication. Unlike the Jones narrative, in which the dedication is situated at the end of the memoir, the Wilkinson narrative uses the dedication as a title: "To my daughter who is a Canadian...I dedicate these reminiscences" (1). With the dedication situated conspicuously at the beginning of the

narrative, Wilkinson places herself first and establishes herself as the central participant and the person with rights to the story. Jo Malin cites Bakhtin to argue that, as mothers and daughters engage in a dialogic act of autobiographical writing, there exists the opportunity to "subvert the monologic 'word of the father' of male autobiography" (10). Malin continues: "Two women's voices (a daughter's and a mother's), in conversation, can subvert the monologic, authoritative autobiography (usually male) of accomplishment and great deeds: 'the striving to live a heroic life, to achieve significance in the world of others, to win fame and glory'" (10). This point is usefully applied to an analysis of Wilkinson's memoir where, unlike the Jones narrative, men receive minimal attention. Wilkinson does mention her husband, but she portrays her spouse as a character of secondary importance to tell a story that is, foremost, about herself. Consider, for example, the way that Wilkinson writes about her interaction with Barr:

> The following day I took two buckets and went up to the R.C.M.P. Barracks for water. I saw two men coming towards me. With the easy familiarity of those days, they stopped to talk, and I put down my bucket to listen....After a little more conversation, I asked them what they thought the police would do with old Barr at the Barracks. He had been sent for to show his books and give an account of some of his shady transactions. They smiled but said nothing. When I returned to the tent, Mrs. Bosworth who had been watching me asked what I had said to old Barr, as he was disrespectfully called. I said I hadn't seen him" but she said, "you were talking to him." Oh Dear!! (15-16)

Wilkinson sees no need to leave the chastising of Barr to the men; rather, she records her own interaction with him. Despite her outspokenness, Wilkinson still portrays herself as a refined woman who would not knowingly have been impolite to Barr. The care with which Wilkinson depicts herself at this point is crucial, as she portrays herself as deferential towards an authority figure. Hence, I agree with Buss when she argues that settler females who write memoirs face a particular challenge in the form of a stereotype that has come to be associated with the Canadian pioneer woman: "the memoir writer assumes a public form and confronts immediately the problem of 'altruism, selflessness, and reticence'" (*Mapping* 62). In the diaries and in Rendell's letters, the writers' reserve is seen as the product of an environment where compliance mitigated some of the hardships that women could face in western Canada.

Ultimately, however, I believe that something quite apart from reticence characterizes these memoirs. That something is the beginnings of a more confident female voice. According to Elizabeth Thompson, "the picture of the typical pioneer woman...[is] a self-assured, confident woman, who adapts cheerfully to adverse circumstances, one who is capable and active in an emergency, one who plays a vital role in pioneering" (4). This image emerges from the memoirs written by Britannia women and suggests that a shift begins to occur as time progresses and the women gain distance from the empire. The transition is perceptible at moments when some of the Britannia women reveal that they are less self-conscious about portraying themselves as persons with perfect manners. Returning to Wilkinson's memoir, it is possible to overread her interaction with Barr to glean additional meaning. Earlier works—women's diaries and letters—do not include moments where women are confrontational with Barr. Indeed

Rendell is restrained in her assessment of the failed leader, stating that "Mr. Barr did not carry out all he promised (though we have no cause to complain as he always dealt very fairly with us)" (June 4, 1903). Wilkinson, by contrast, is much more opinionated about the subject. When she writes that she does not recognize Barr, she performs reticence because she implies that, had she recognized him, she would not have spoken so forthrightly. To overread the moment is to consider that Wilkinson knows she is speaking to Barr as she calls attention to his "shady" transactions. The reader suspects Wilkinson's tactic, but cannot confirm this suspicion; hence, the memoirist successfully plays with a form that enables her to articulate her opinions. The move is subtle; indeed, Wilkinson is concerned about portraying good manners to the extent that she develops a strategy to maintain a polite façade as she relates this incident. However, the example does mark a modification within the discourse which occurs as time passes.

This argument is not to suggest that the themes commonly found in the diaries and letters written during the early years of the colony are entirely different from those found in the memoirs. The move away from the preoccupation with polished behaviour is gradual, and there are many references similar to those found in the diaries. Sanderson, for example, remembers how "in the evenings after supper we used to all sit around the stove, sewing or doing fancy work" (6). Her choice of phrase suggests that the women in her household wanted to establish a cultural tone brought about by doing polite kinds of domestic tasks. A memoir by Edith Arrowsmith reinforces that decorum was a part of social life when she recalls that "everyone was hospitable" (7). On the whole, however, the memoirists do not demonstrate the same degree of concern to portray refined behaviour that is perceived in the diaries. For example, Arrowsmith openly describes

how, during inclement weather, the family shared their floorless shack with "a fine team of Clydes" (4). Most changed throughout the memoirs is the depiction of women's work. In their memoirs, women depart from the tendency to emphasize leisure. Instead, these women speak about the complexity of their work, as well as the sacrifices that the work involves. The use of altruism, reticence, and selflessness—qualities that Buss suggests hinders the memoirist—is the means by which these women emphasize their contributions. Memoirs that follow this pattern are particularly important to Britannia women in that they provide them with a format that enables them to achieve increased recognition for their work and for their contributions on the homesteads.

Wilkinson's dedication—which is also her title—supports this argument. The transcript is typed; however, the narrative bears a handwritten and edited heading which reads: "To my daughter who is a Canadian and so ~~escaped the hardships of the trail~~ did not share our experiences I dedicate these reminiscences." The title suggests that Wilkinson intends to underemphasize difficulties. Yet to overread this moment is to consider the gesture which makes it possible to discern "more coded representations of female signature" (Miller 83). Wilkinson, after all, does not render this deleted phrase illegible as she might have done had she wished to make it impossible for the reader to discern it. It is clear from much of her memoir that Wilkinson intends for her daughter—and any other reader—to know that her work was difficult and that her suffering was extreme. Consider the following example in which Wilkinson speaks about the railway journey to Saskatoon:

> Unfortunately for me, I had very little time to see the wonders of nature. Always inclined to train sickness, the rocking and tossing of the coaches

> as they clumsily swayed and lumbered along, made it very unpleasant for me as I staggered along between our seats and the cook stove, carrying our daily meals. Owing to the fact that one stove had to supply the needs of the whole coach, a lot of time was wasted whilst I impatiently waited my turn. (5)

One needs only to contrast this latest example with Rendell's descriptions of the train to observe a shift in the tone. Rendell certainly indicates that the CPR trip was uncomfortable. In fact, in a letter dated April 22, 1903, she goes so far as to state that her ride brought about "'discomfort' and 'misery.'" Yet Rendell softens her critique by stating that her purpose in bringing the matter forward is "for the good of others." From this point, she inevitably shifts to a cheerier tone to speak about the "grand bits of scenery" in Canada. At the time in which Wilkinson tells her story, she no longer feels an obligation to proselytize on behalf of the empire or to tell her story for the benefit of future settlers. She states frankly that it was difficult to care for "my two boys who found the restrictions of train life very hard to bear" (5). Rendell uses "we" to gently share her discomfort aboard the train with the other colonists, writing that there were "many a time we had felt faint and famished with hunger" (April 22, 1903). Wilkinson's voice is more assertive: "Then there were dishes to be washed, another meal to prepare, letters to write, etc. so that I never had time to really enjoy the beautiful country through which we were passing" (5). Of particular interest is the moment when Wilkinson depicts letter writing as a burden. This image is in contrast to ones created by the diarists, and by Rendell, all of whom convey that they have ample time to write. Rendell never depicts writing to Britons as a bother; rather, she makes time to correspond, even "as [she] looks out [her]

tent door" (May 15, 1903). For Wilkinson, writing letters while on the journey to the homestead is an inconvenience. Letter-writing is a task that she does not have adequate time to undertake, and, writing years later, she freely admits her resentment of this social obligation.

Another kind of labour that Britannia women found themselves obliged to perform was farm work. While Rollings-Magnusson states that many settler women had "to lend their assistance when needed in the fields," this theme is not emphasized in the diaries or in Rendell's letters (2). The exception is Nowell who does, on occasion, write about fieldwork in her journal. On Tuesday, September 8, 1909, for example, she writes: "I went out stooking, very hot." Bellward's and Rendell's primary acknowledgement of outdoor work occurs when each writes an account about having to fight a prairie fire. Bellward writes: "Arthur and I stayed by our own house to fight [the fire] with wet sacks, it was a grand and awful sight" (May 15, 1903). Rendell also describes an incident during which she and several other women defend the Rendell home from a prairie fire.[41] It is interesting that, in both of these accounts, the women emphasize the defence of the domestic sphere. Apart from these examples, the majority of the Rendell and Bellward entries are written about work done inside as opposed to outdoors. When they do write about work done outside the house, it is work completed out of urgent necessity versus part of the daily routine. The Jones diary is particularly ambiguous in this regard. It has already been shown that diarists often emphasize the work that men did, such as on August 31, 1910, when Jones writes, "Arthur dragging." Other times, Jones does not identify the doer of the work. On Thursday, May 19, she simply notes, "Ploughing. Chopping scrub," while on June 6, 1910, her entry states: "Breaking and scrub cutting."

Although it is not possible to confirm whether or not Jones ploughed or chopped scrub, it is certain that some Britannia women did do outdoor work. However, given the class connotations around this type of labour, it is likely that some women would have felt self-conscious about their participation in this type of non-domestic work. A passage from *Janey Canuck in the West*, written in 1910, indicates that "unfriendly critics...made [much of] the fact that the Doukhobor women perform the arduous work of harnessing themselves to the plough" (qtd. in Rasmussen 56). Of Britannia women more specifically, Wilkinson comments on her newly formed friendship with a non-British woman. "Mrs. Iverson was a very good hearted and friendly woman, although it took some time to understand each other. She could not understand why Englishwomen did not work in the fields and I could not understand some of their customs" (26). Such attitudes might well have prompted some Britannia women not to admit they did outdoor work, particularly at early points in the colony's history.

Evidence supports that Britannia women did, however, work in the fields. Indeed, several photos of Agnes Wheeler show her at work in the fields on the Wheeler-Rackham homestead (see Fig. 14). Enid Wheeler, Agnes's sister, also spent time helping on the land, and recalls in her memoir how her "brother-in-law liked [her] to be out in the field as [she] acted as a challenge to the men to keep ahead" (38-39). Sanderson writes in her memoir that she "ran the rake [as] we put in long days, and it was hard work" (20). Sanderson also recalls how "Mary would pitch the sheaves and Dad would build the stack" (11). And despite Wilkinson's prior comment, she ultimately "tried her hand at clearing...trees in the bluff" (30). As the image of the ideal Canadian woman becomes firmly instilled in the nation's discourse, women acquire the latitude to portray

themselves favourably as the doers of outdoor work. When they undertake to portray themselves in this fashion, Britannia women continue the development of a literary tradition in which English gentlewomen become Canadian pioneer women. Indeed, women's readiness to describe their accomplishments on the land suggests that they took particular pride in work outside the domestic sphere and that, over time, they felt less self-conscious about class issues that originated in their homeland.

Ultimately, what takes place is a transition where leisure is no longer portrayed by these women as labour. Not all the memoirists express this transition in terms of their participation in the fields or on homesteads, however. Some, like Marion Lloyd, make the shift more gradually by emphasizing other kinds of work such as their maternal and supportive roles. As the spouse of one of the colony's founders, Marion Lloyd is western Canada's version of those imperial women who "served discreetly at the elbow of power as colonial officer's wives" (McClintock 6). Thus, Marion Lloyd tells a version of the Britannia story to honour the memory of her late husband while emphasizing her success as Reverend Lloyd's wife and mother of his children. Lloyd begins her memoir with the traditional story about the primary party, positioning herself as witness to some of the planning that took place around the organization of the party from her husband's perspective: "Mr. Lloyd [was] appointed Chaplain to the party, and financed by the Colonial and Continental Church Society of London, England" (1).[42] After the standard statement that "the party sailed from Liverpool on the 'S.S. Lake Manitoba,'" Lloyd breaks with the established pattern by declining to make a single comment about Barr (1). Lloyd does emphasize, however, that her husband took steps to prepare the people for their arrival. "Lectures were given on board, Mr. Lloyd and others telling them of

conditions on the prairie and what life would be like in Canada" (1). She continues to portray her husband's leadership as sound, and takes steps to construct a narrative that will protect and reinforce Lloyd's credibility.

Marion Lloyd makes strategic use of the first person to alternate between participant and witness. Lloyd always conveys a sense of propriety and the mission's success when, like Rendell and Topott, she slips between pronouns. She writes, for example, that "we had splendid Church services [aboard the ship] using the large steerage dining room" (1). Rather than provide an overview about the ship's overcrowded and uncomfortable conditions as an actual participant, she distances herself when she assumes the witness stance: "The ship had been a troop ship during the South African War, and had not been very much changed—the fares paid by the people were very low, as they needed all their savings for their new homes" (1). While Rendell uses "we" as a means to achieve inclusion, Lloyd uses a plural pronoun to denote some of the benefits felt by the colonists. In this way, she establishes some distance from narratives where the writers are critical of the scheme, including the quality of accommodations aboard the *S.S. Lake Manitoba* and the lack of foresight and planning on the part of leadership that had taken place prior to the group's arrival in Canada.

Lloyd also underemphasizes the difficulties associated with rail travel. In contrast to Wilkinson, and even to Rendell, Lloyd describes the colonists' time aboard the trains as "quite a novelty" and that the passengers were "willing to do everything in their power to help in every way" (2). Hardships associated with the oxen trek are also minimized by Lloyd who writes that the "200 miles on the prairie [was] just Indian trails [and] no mud roads" (2). She further diminishes the adverse conditions when she adds that the

"Government had provided tents with good cooking stoves and wood for fuel, also hay for the animals every fifteen miles close to where a supply of water could be had" (2). There are a number of possible reasons that Lloyd writes in this tone. As the wife of one of the party's leaders, Lloyd would have had greater access to comforts on the ship than most of the colonists. Her avoidance of Barr may have been an attempt on her part to be diplomatic and respectful, or it may have been her attempt to disassociate her husband from Barr and to eradicate him from the story. Irrespective of her motives, Lloyd's refusal to acknowledge any administrative shortfalls, or the colonists' difficulties during the journey, suggests her complicity with an imperial scheme that was not planned to meet the colonists' needs. Indeed, during the early portion of her memoir, Lloyd suggests that the journey to Canada was a mannerly affair, complete with a social itinerary that included lectures and church services.

Yet Lloyd does not reinforce leisure as a theme across her narrative. Although she remains a witness in the narrative for much of the trip from England, Lloyd assumes a stronger participant role as denoted by her move to the confident use of the first person. Having just left Saskatoon, Lloyd writes that she and her family "were surprised to see some [of the colonists] who had left [the town] several days before returning saying 'there were no places to buy bread'" (2). Lloyd adopts an assertive tone as she speaks of her response to this problem: "I took flour, lard and baking powder and taught them how to make it into baking powder bread and rolls....When reaching the colony I taught the men and women how to bake their own bread with yeast cakes" (3). With this statement, Lloyd begins to recount a number of adventures, all of which demonstrate her resourcefulness.

While in Battleford, the Lloyds' eldest daughter becomes seriously ill and, as a result, Mrs. Lloyd undergoes a period of quarantine with her child.[43] "The shack where I nursed my daughter had rooms divided by lengths of factory cotton, while the roof leaked and all around the floor there was a space so the little gophers would run in and out," she states (4). Lloyd is quick to point out her ability to cope as well as her willingness to sacrifice: "I borrowed a canvas stretcher...and I slept on my steamer trunk with brown blankets and my camping pillow. My daughter had the only sheets" (4). Lloyd's maternal skills and her willingness to sacrifice—the selflessness and altruism that Buss acknowledges as being part of the pioneer woman's discourse—are what enable the daughter to survive. These are also the qualities that mark Lloyd as a female imperialist who succeeds at her maternal duty.

Lloyd also recalls how she assisted one young Britannia mother in childbirth. Only at the last moment does the doctor arrive to deliver the child. Although she "had never attended anything of that nature before," Lloyd emphasizes how she "didn't let the Mother know" (5). As if to provide further proof of her skill as a maternal figure, Lloyd writes that she "had to wash and dress the baby on my lap with the large oven door open quite close, but the little chap never caught cold, and neither did the mother. He was a splendid little fellow, and he was always called 'my baby'" (5). Thus much of Lloyd's memoir focuses on the ways in which she does good imperial work when she facilitates the safety and care of British children. Marion Lloyd's short memoir depicts a woman who embodies those "societal values by which an imperial power might wish to be defined," including the idealized roles of the mother, homemaker, and "Victorian female civilizer" (Floyd 77). Coincidentally, Lloyd also portrays herself as an ideal Canadian

pioneer woman: one who is "self-assured [and] confident, one who adapts cheerfully to adverse circumstances, one who is capable and active in an emergency, one who plays a vital role in pioneering" (Thompson 4). Thus we return to the question introduced in the introduction to this section: does the move away from the depiction of leisure as labour mean that Britannia women move away from imperialism? Leisure is, after all, in this context, an imperial construct since it was imperialist propaganda that pressed women to believe that, if they simply applied themselves, they would find domestic work in Canada to be less "strenuous [than] might be expected" (Moyles and Owram 197). Asked another way: do Britannia women see themselves as transformed by their new homeland, or do they believe that they have transformed Canada?

It is clear that Lloyd understands her attributes—and the attributes of the other colonists—to be the products of "true British courage" (8). Indeed, Lloyd writes that "the whole settlement entailed a large amount of hard work, thought and foresight, as all foundations must do, but we looked to the future in the right way, for the Glory of God and the coming of his Kingdom" (8). This constitutes Lloyd's primary moment of introspection which is actually better understood to be a lack of reflexivity. Lloyd does not need to "reassess, reconsider, and reconfigure her memories and subject positions [to] allow for the possibility of more change in the future" (Buss, *Repossessing* 17). Reflexivity is not necessary because, in her view, Britain provides the framework for the new nation and Britain has been transplanted into western Canada.

Lloyd demonstrates a strong commitment to preserve the colony's historical narrative in a distinctly imperial voice when she seeks to defend the British people who came to Canada with her husband's party. In addition to her memoir, she also prepared a

defence of the Britannia history on at least one occasion. On March 28, 1949, Lloyd composed a letter to the *Canadian Churchman* to advise the magazine's editor that she "would like to correct one or two inaccuracies" found in an article titled "The Barr Colony." One of the points she takes exception to is the article's claim that the men who joined Barr's party were not farmers but "sons of clergymen, a young lawyer..., a newspaper editor..., and two sons of the president of a seed company (cover page). "The *Churchman's* article says, 'of experienced farmers there were none,'" states Lloyd. She continues: "But there were several in the party... [including] graduates of the Agricultural College at Guelph" (135). When Lloyd points out that several of the men in the party had agricultural experience, she works to offset frequent claims that the Britannia colonists were greenhorns. An article by Shannon Sutherland to commemorate Lloydminster's centennial indicates that "all kinds of stories have been told over the years to illustrate the naiveté of the 'green' colonists" (16). Bowen discusses how, in 1903, newspapers like the *Saskatchewan Herald* published stories about greenhorns, and rightly notes that many of these stories were "probably not true" (167). One of Marion Lloyd's key objectives is to point out that many of the colonists were skilled agriculturists. In this way, she defends the scheme and she defends Britain's push to send settlers to Canada.[44]

Other female memoirists take up this theme in slightly different ways. Clara Causley, for example, admits that "Dad was very, very green" but does not make this statement to mock her father (n.pag.). The unknown author exaggerates a number of debacles involving various male and female colonists, including the following example:

> Two young homesteaders decided to stop at a creek and give their horses a drink. The animals were thirsty and pawed in vain to reach the water,

> [but] their heads could not go down. One of the men, thinking he would solve the difficulty went around and lifted up the back of the buggy. As I was not an eye-witness, I cannot say whether or not the team's thirst was quenched. (8)

If some of the colonists' lack of agricultural expertise made them the subject of scorn amongst Canadians, the memoirists retell these stories to stress how the British overcame hardships. Thus the unknown author ultimately stresses that "many [colonists] came from offices and practically all from large cities, so they had no chance of knowing much about horses, cattle and machinery" (3). Despite this handicap, she concludes her memoir by stating that most of the party did succeed and she attributes this success to her British roots: "Although they are a splendid class of Canadian citizens, proud of, and believing in their new country, there still remains a deep-seated and unswerving loyalty to the Old Land" (11). For the unknown author, and for Marion Lloyd, being British is, in and of itself, the attribute that helps the Britannia colonists succeed in the new homeland.

Lloyd's memoir, like the memoir by the unknown author, is based on the imperial belief that British people are superior. To varying degrees, this message is reinforced in the writers' acceptances of Anglo-conformist politics. While the memoirs reflect some acceptance of non-British peoples, the presence of such a hierarchy is always readily discernable. For example, John Porter outlines how Anglo-Canadians of the time believed that Scandinavian people would "be a certain success" (65). This assumption is reflected in Sanderson's memoir when she writes that "we had some good Norwegian neighbours who knew how to build and were artists at putting up log buildings" (15).

Sanderson recalls her father's willingness to do business with this family and articulates a respect for their skills. Additionally, Sanderson depicts a visit with these neighbours:

> One day I went for a ride…over to Grosseths. The lady couldn't speak any English, but she took me in and over in the corner of the kitchen was a cradle, and her name was CORA. I had to stay and have lunch before I went home. From then on the two families became great friends and neighbours. (13)

Sanderson's visit with Mrs. Grosseth revolves around motherhood and hospitality. Sanderson suggests that the two women share some commonalities and that the Grosseths are worthy of friendship. Truscott also describes similar interactions with the Finlaysons—the family she "worked for [who] had traveled some years earlier from Ontario" (n.pag.). Truscott does not disclose the cultural origins of this family. However, her discussion of their eating habits reflects differing backgrounds: "For breakfast, in the Canadian home, there was always rolled oat porridge lightly salted and eaten with rich milk, no sugar, and none in tea" (15). Truscott further explains that "Mrs. Finlayson was amazed at the English heavy use of sugar" (15). That such interactions occur in her relationship with her employer suggests that Truscott worked to transplant British customs inside the home of the people for whom she worked.

Wilkinson's memoir signals the greatest departure from British ethnocentrism as evidenced by her acceptance of Mrs. Iverson's customs. Additionally, she writes, "we found many of the Canadian customs quite different to those which we were accustomed; however being in Rome we did as the Romans did, and soon fell into their ways" (21). Still, Wilkinson is quite clear that she will not take on habits and practices that are an

offence to her British sensibilities. At one point, she terminates a business transaction with an American when she observes what she holds to be his lack of manners. Although she initially finds him to be "a very nice man," she is horrified when she witnesses his habit of chewing tobacco. "Finally he asked what we thought of his offer," explains Wilkinson, "but he chose that moment to expectorate" (9). "It appeared," continues Wilkinson, "that it was the custom to spit it out into the stove....Of course I did not know that, and was absolutely horrified and disgusted...[and] declined the offer with thanks" (9). If Wilkinson hints that her attitude towards manners is slightly relaxed when she tells her Barr story, it is significant to note that, at the very moment she critiques a non-British man, Wilkinson regains her preoccupation with manners. Thus the narrator presents a hierarchy where she implies that her British manners and customs are superior, justifying her decision not to do business with the American.

Britannia colonists also tended to view the Doukhobor people with considerable suspicion. Their prejudice is, according to Angus McLaren, rooted in the Anglo-conformist belief that "white Anglo-Saxons are racially superior" and that eastern Europeans are among the least desirable emigrants (47). Returning to "The Jones Story," Catherine Jones recalls that in the fall of 1905, Grandma Jones came to Canada to join the rest of her family. During the trip to the homestead, Jones explains that members of her family spent one night at a Doukhobor farm. "One old woman," writes Jones, "couldn't resist peeping and was amazed at the quantity and style of clothes Grandma wore, telling the rest of the women the next morning." "Consequently," Jones continues, "when Grandma got dressed she had an audience...much to Grandma's embarrassment"

(2). Jones recalls Grandma Jones's discomfort and signals the family's ongoing belief that Doukhobor people posed a threat to British propriety.

A deeper mistrust of the Doukhobors is articulated by Hiemstra who, on several occasions, remembers an ongoing disagreement between her parents over her father's admiration of Doukhobor women. While Sara Pinder is grateful for the hospitality provided by the Doukhobor people with whom they take shelter one night, she is deeply upset by her husband's admiration of one young woman. Walter Pinder suggests that Jack, the youngest child, ought to marry a Doukhobor: "a man could do a lot worse than marry such a lass" he states (93). Hiemstra recalls that Sara Pinder's response was to "glare out of cold blue eyes: 'If that's the way you feel maybe you'd better dump me and the bairns in the next slough and go back'" (93). Hiemstra portrays these exchanges as her mother's jealous reaction; however, the origins of this story can be related to the empire. According to Rosalind O' Hanlon, "the British women, wives and mothers, who arrived in growing numbers from the early years of the twentieth century, were to stand as custodians of the new Imperial morality...as guardians...of personal morality and family life"(393). In Hiemstra's narrative, it is Sara Pinder who enacts a "maternal imperialist" role when she refutes her husband's ideas about cross-cultural marriage to ensure the purity of the British race (O' Hanlon 393). Moreover, Hiemstra continues to perpetuate this ethnocentric belief when she presents the events involving the Doukhobor women as humorous anecdotes, and thereby does not counter her mother's ethnocentric opinion. The narrator's lack of reflexivity in this regard signals that some of the colonists normalized the conduct of their foremothers which was to identify the Doukhobor women as helpful and kindly, but of secondary status to British women.

The failure to reflect on ethnocentric conduct is the strongest indicator of an imperial mindset across these narratives, particularly regarding the colonists' responses to Aboriginals. While it is well documented that the Cree from a reserve in Onion Lake assisted the colonists to build Lloydminster's first church, there tends to be limited mention of these individuals in any of the life narratives. Catherine Hall writes of expansionist projects in general, stating that "by the mid-1860s it seemed that Indians, Afro-Jamaicans, Xhosa, Maori, and Khoisan had all been defeated and Aboriginal populations decimated by disease, famine, and violence" (48). By the time the Britannia colonists arrive in western Canada, Aboriginal persons were assumed to have been safely removed to reserves. A pamphlet inviting prospective settlers to western Canada, produced by Sifton, around the time of the establishment of the Britannia colony, includes a section titled, "Are the Indians Troublesome?" [45] A brief answer to the question is all that the writer deems necessary:

> No; quite the reverse. They remain peaceably on their reservations and entertain no unkind feelings towards the white settlers. Law and order are maintained throughout the country by the Northwest Mounted Police, a semi-military force, the existence of which makes life and property as safe in the new Western settlements as in the large cities of the East. (12)

While certain of the colonists were curious of about First Nations peoples, there is little meaningful acknowledgment expressed in these narratives over the effects of colonization on the local bands.[46]

Although Britannia women write about interactions with First Nations people, it is clear that they see themselves as civilizers in these relationships. Sanderson writes about

how her family gave shelter to an Aboriginal man named Damas Laundry one cold winter night. She recalls that their kindness was returned when the man returned "in two days time pulling a hand sleigh, with a deer on it...for us" (6-8). Ultimately, the British place limits on the boundaries of these friendships as represented by the acceptance of those individuals' customs in the domestic sphere. A similar observation is made by Floyd, who argues that food can be "plainly expressive of what is cast as civilized social behaviour in any society, and the emphasis on both transmitting national practices in the cooking and eating of food, and on marking the limits of possible adaptation may be viewed as lying firmly within the remit of the civilizer" (87- 88). This statement is also true of Truscott who is invited to a "tea dance" hosted by a local band (10). Although she participates in the festivities, she stops short of accepting refreshments: "We were offered tea—or soup, both of which were declined" (10). Similarly, while Sanderson's family accepts Damas Laundrey's gift of deer meat, they opt to remain hungry when Laundry suggests gophers as a food source. "Some how," remembers Sanderson, "we didn't ever cook any, we just didn't fancy eating GOPHERS" (13). Where there is some willingness to exchange customs with other Europeans, there are increased limits placed on the receiving of customs belonging to Aboriginal people.

Throughout these memoirs, there is a conspicuous absence of any consideration as to the negative impact that Europeans had on First Nations people. Marion Lloyd mentions that the building she obtained shelter in during her daughter's quarantine in Battleford had been used "as a place for Indian women who were under supervision" (3). Lloyd's unquestioning acceptance of Aboriginal women's incarceration reflects her disinterest in these women's welfares. Truscott also tells a story about how the

Finlaysons gave shelter to a young Aboriginal woman. Later, this woman is said to have repaid them for their kindness by secretly warning "the family of an imminent uprising of Métis and Indians" (15). The memoirists, however, do not acknowledge any negative aspects of white colonization. Writing of pioneer narratives in general, Floyd acknowledges this problem, stating that "the accompanying silence, in these emigrant texts, on the issue of appropriation of land and its implications for those outside the colonizing group draws us back to the social politics of these texts" (75). Given that many of these memoirs were written decades after the colony's inception, these silences are particularly troublesome.

Thus far it has been demonstrated that, while Britannia women do seem to move away from some of the constraining class values that followed them in their homeland, they remain devoted to the idea that Britons are a superior race of people. The shift in tone that is marked by a move away from depictions of leisure as labour within the short memoirs is the strongest, most prevalent, indicator of a transition across the life narratives composed by these women. That the tone across the memoirs is so similar, however, raises the possibility that women feared writing in ways that would set themselves apart from the group. One of the key observations to be made across the survey of life narratives used in this project is that women from the Britannia colony had a wide circle of personal contacts. As members of small communities in several townships, it was geographically possible, and likely, that many of the members would come into contact with one another. Even the small sampling of life narratives used in this project reflects numerous personal ties among the colonists. Hiemstra, for example, mentions Topott. As we have seen, the Kent and Jones families were acquainted. The

Arrowsmiths are mentioned in the Kent diary, as are the Topotts. Clara Causley immigrated with "Miss Harvey," the woman who brought the Rendell's youngest son to Canada in 1904 (1). Henrietta Bellward had an intimate friendship with Alice Rendell. Bellward also mentions a visit from Marion Lloyd. This kind of community is quite different from Benedict Anderson's imagined one, where it is argued that "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them" (6). While Anderson's argument is true in the broad sense of nations, personal connections inside settler communities, including the Britannia colony, were common; hence, there existed a strong potential for the group members to exert peer pressure on one another.

The author of a commemorative article titled "Peggy Byrne: The Last of the Barr Colonists," stresses that "it was important to be well regarded, since many of the Barr Colonists came to rely on each other for support and friendship" (Sutherland 24). While this type of system enabled the colonists to provide one another with social support, it also provided ample opportunities for surveillance to occur. Floyd writes that some scholars have "focused on the way in which Anglo women were themselves oppressed within the hierarchy that their behaviour was expected to support" (77). Inspection was, after all, the role of the civilizer who was responsible to guide the behaviours of others. Hiemstra raises this point when she recalls her mother's conflicted feelings about visits from a particular neighbour: "Mother always worried after one of Mrs Metherell's visits, even though she enjoyed them. ...Had Mrs Metherell noticed that her towels, washed in brown slough water, were turning dark?...With Mrs Metherell about, nothing could be safely hidden or even camouflaged" (117). Mrs. Metherell—whose name appears on the

S.S. Lake Manitoba's passenger list—is represented as one who regulates the conduct of other women.

The similarities found across the narratives, along with Hiemstra's example, raise a question around whether or not women felt free to express unique viewpoints from inside this close community. It is quite clear, for instance, that many of the Britannia women viewed Marion Lloyd as a leadership figure. Hiemstra writes that Mrs. Lloyd remained in Lloydminster "that first year to inspire confidence....She encouraged the women, made soup for those who were ill, and did what she could when babies were born" (215). One of the qualities shared across several memoirs are the writers' proud recollections of personal interactions with Mrs. Lloyd. Truscott recalls how, after a particularly exhausting day on the trek, Mrs. Lloyd appears with a gift of salmon. Truscott writes that she "could never forget these kindnesses" (5). In a particularly detailed account published in a local newspaper, Mrs. Hunt also recalls an exchange with Mrs. Lloyd:

> Mrs. Lloyd proved to be a great friend to us all during the early years. She was never too busy to help out. We could always be sure of a welcome from her and a cup of tea on an afternoon after a long walk into town for mail and supplies. On one such remembered occasion she showed me how to bake bread. I could not make good bread. Flour was such a dreadful price and hard to obtain so we had to eat what we baked but sometimes this was hard to do.... I so enjoyed Mrs. Lloyd's good bread...so gathering all the necessary things together she showed me the whole process step by

> step. I may say I had very little trouble with bread making after that. (n.pag. n.d)

When Marion Lloyd recalls how she taught the other colonists to bake bread, she writes that "it was most amusing to see some of the results, and in years after, [there were] many talks and laughter about it" (3). Like her husband, Marion Lloyd functions as a saviour to the people. She is portrayed by others—and by herself—as an exemplary British civilizer who improves not only Canadians, but her fellow Britons as well. With the bread story, Lloyd positions herself as superior to the other Britannia women who did not come to Canada equipped with this skill.

Despite the complexities associated with such power relations, the Britannia women in this study remain loyal to the community. Even Hiemstra endorses the community as a place where women could obtain support. After a particularly difficult winter, Hiemstra recalls how her mother had been involved in clandestine discussions among the colony's women about whether or not to remain in Canada. When questioned by her husband about these discussions, Pinder is vague about her participation. Asked to elaborate, she simply responds: "Things get around even on the prairie" (274). Ultimately, Britannia women included in this study willingly make rhetorical gestures to demonstrate their support of the community.

What the community provides is a consensus of voices that empowers women to speak forcefully about the contributions they made, and the impact their work had on them. In this way the women construct images of themselves as reserved and unselfish, and, as they perform these characteristics, they confidently speak about the importance of what they did in Canada. Implicit in many memoirs are critiques of the present day where

women no longer must perform the same kinds of labour that was required of Britannia women. At such junctures the memoirists are reflexive only as they imagine a different world in the form of a nostalgic desire for the past. They resist freedom from the images they have constructed of themselves as reticent, selfless, or altruistic. Causley is militant in this regard:

> I know what hard work is. I've carried buckets of water for a herd of cows—oxen all day long, and I've fallen down a badger hole, and spilled the water and had to go back for more. I've carried blocks of snow just like blocks of ice to keep 3 or 4 barrels of water full all winter for thirsty cattle and for household use. (n. pag.)

Causley has constructed her self-representation to demonstrate how she is selfless and hardworking, and a move to a more modern society detracts from this claim. "It does peeve me when I hear these push button housewives and kids complain. Hard work never killed anyone," she states (n. pag.). Wilkinson also includes a reflexive moment of this type when she recalls the words spoken to her by an admiring Canadian: "The way you women adapted yourselves to your new lives was simply marvellous, you faced the hardships without murmur..... The girls of today could not have done it—no sir-ee, they could not" (17). Wilkinson, of course, performs an appropriately reticent response: "if they were face to face with the same conditions, they probably could and would" (17). Truscott's approach to the topic varies again when she states that "the younger generation has many benefits denied the early settlers" (n.pag.). Truscott's message is an altruistic one. For her, the work done in the colony has paved the way for a better life for her descendants. Whatever the format, the message is that Britannia women were proud of

their contributions. Here, then, exists a final similarity across many of the short memoirs. Britannia women are unwilling to relinquish their claim to a world where hard physical labour was the requirement of women.

The diaries reveal women's commitment to the development of the community. The memoirs reinforce that the community did come to exist and that it did provide women with the opportunities to write about themselves in more confident voices. The commonalities across the memoirs, including standard retellings of the Barr story, or descriptions of how each woman encounters and surmounts challenges, creates a place from which more forceful forms of self-representation emerge. While these more assertive self-depictions tend to be homogenous—for example, in my research I encountered no single memoirist who overtly rejects the community or convention—the consistencies produce a narrative format that comes to belong to Britannia women and enables them to claim a moment in a history that has might otherwise overlook them. My point is substantiated by the work of critics who study women's autobiography, including Perrault who draws from the work of Jane Marcus to argue that "feminist gestures towards cohesion may be grounded in the desire for a 'point of departure' and, indeed, a point of arrival that embrace a process of transformation as a revolutionary concept, and as a feminist principle" (qtd. in *Autobiography/Transformation* 194). As they implement standard features into their memoirs, Britannia women's voices undergo a transformation and they confidently acknowledge the magnitude of their work. Moreover, they articulate their claims behalf of their British homeland.

Conclusion

"The Horses were my Great-Grandmother's Passion."

In the final chapter of her book—*Repossessing the World: Reading Memoirs by Contemporary Women*—Helen Buss argues that "for memoir to be successful, the form needs readers who enter a text with an 'attitude' that does not seek to appropriate, judge or colonize, but that mandates that readers risk their own vulnerabilities in reading the memoir text" (189). Over the course of the many months that I have worked with Britannia women's autobiographies, Buss's statement has remained on my mind. While I would prefer to describe my study of Britannia women's narratives in more noble terms as a revision to a history that thus far has underrepresented women, there have been many moments that Buss's warning not to "appropriate, judge, or colonize" has troubled me. Ultimately, I have taken these women's words and concluded that Britannia women are powerful agents of the British Empire, capable of using imperial politics to their advantages. While I believe that argument to be true, powerful is not among the usual adjectives used to describe these women. In my concern to create a work that is respectful of Britannia women, I am left to wonder if my own goals and objectives have had too great an influence on the ways that I have read their texts.

The goals and objectives of which I speak are twofold. The first goal of this project is to satisfy an academic requirement. In this capacity, my work is driven by a need to consider the subjects in the context of contemporary theoretical issues that, in this case, include gender, imperialism, gender and imperialism, feminism, and autobiography. While many people have written about the Britannia colony in a popular format, to consider the colony in these contexts is not a common approach. It has demanded of me

that I take my interpretation of these women's narratives in a new direction that seeks to discover how these women functioned within patriarchal systems to improve the courses of their lives. What I have determined is that the imperial role and, ultimately, the role of the Canadian pioneer woman, are performed by Britannia women in ways that enable them to achieve greater autonomy as settler females on the prairies.

My second objective is rooted in the personal. With this admission comes my own moment of autobiographical confession. As I began in my Introduction, my interest in the Britannia colony was first sparked by my grandmother who, many years ago, taught me that my great-grandfather was a *Barr colonist.* Stanley Rackham came to Canada with Barr's primary party, while my great-grandmother, Agnes—Nessie, as she is known by my family—joined Rackham in Canada a few years later after marrying him in 1912. It was after the death of my grandmother that my cousin and I began work on a family history project in which we've sorted, catalogued, transcribed and taken steps to preserve four hundred photographs, a collection of nine journals written by my great-grandfather, and, uncounted letters written by the Rackham and Wheeler families in Canada and in England. While this process has enabled us to learn a considerable amount about our great-grandfather's life, comparably less information has been discovered about Nessie. To date, what has been recovered includes a journal fragment of only a few pages, numerous photographs taken by, and of her, samples of her artwork, and the courtship letters between her and Rackham. While these findings are not unsubstantial, they are piecemeal and in no way equal the vast amounts of detailed information that is readily available on my great-grandfather.

This situation has produced considerable frustration which has been further exacerbated by narratives about the Britannia colony that always fall short of providing any meaningful information about Nessie. Bowen, for example, writes that "Stanley Rackham found the perfect British bride during his travels to England," but ends her narrative after this point (206). Similarly, a website introducing key participants in Lloydminster's history explains that Rackham "was continually involved in the production of …purebred livestock—registered Aberdeen Angus cattle and Thoroughbred horses" ("Lloydminster.Net"). It is true that the Rackham farm was known for its livestock, but the horses were my great-grandmother's undertaking. Enid Wheeler, Nessie's sister, writes:

> Nessie had a passion for animals and she embarked on a project of her own heart. She was breeding polo ponies. She had bought a thoroughbred light stallion 16-17 hands, I suppose, and was always on the lookout for ponies with some good breeding in them…There was constant excitement as to how the progeny would turn out…and she did breed some very good ponies….This was all fairly profitable, though Stanley grumbled that he provided the profit by feeding them all. (38)

The purpose of my telling this story is not to diminish the work done by these researchers, but to demonstrate how our culture has become accustomed to writing—or not writing as the case may be—about settler women. The horse example, in particular, demonstrates how ownership and property rights are strongly connected to the way that our society understands its history. Stanley purchased the horses; hence, he is declared as the owner, despite the fact that the horses were very much my great-grandmother's

project, as evidenced by hundreds of photos taken of her with them, and by her artwork which frequently depicts her favourite animals.

Nessie is an enigmatic figure even within my family. My cousin and I have both attempted to learn about her through discussions with family members, and through perusal of various documents that contain traces of her life. Sadly, none of these stories can be verified. There is an unsubstantiated family myth that some of Nessie's daughters destroyed her journals because Nessie had written some transgressive information about family members. Hushed stories portray Nessie as somewhat ambivalent towards motherhood, and some say that she terminated an unwanted pregnancy. There are also those kinds of whimsical rumours common to many families. One is that my great-grandmother and her sisters—all of whom were avid horsewomen—enjoyed shocking the town's residents when they appeared in Lloydminster wearing pants. A passage in Enid Wheeler's memoir raises this story as a possibility with mention that "ladies [in Lloydminster] wore long skirts and the only alternative they knew was the denim overalls worn by the really shocking girl riders" (35). Another Nessie myth is one in which she climbs out a second-storey window of the hospital maternity ward and, with her newest infant under one arm, drives her democrat home, thereby avoiding what she felt was an unnecessary stay in hospital. There are, in fact, variations in the ways that this story is told. The version shared with me by my grandmother, and according to my memory, has Nessie driving herself home from the hospital. My cousin recalls the story differently, stating that it was Stanley that drove Nessie home after her escape. Such discrepancies further add to the mystery surrounding Nessies's life.

Perhaps the most poignant of the Nessie stories is the one of her wedding day. Enid Wheeler describes the centerpiece atop Nessie's matrimonial cake: "A white water nymph a foot or so high was standing (dripping wet it looked) and clasping her round the knees was a half submerged nymph, also appearing to be dripping wet, obviously trying to hold her back" (21). Enid speculates that the figures on the cake resemble Nessie and her eldest sister, Kathleen, who were extremely close to one another. Given that Nessie's marriage was immediately followed by her emigration to Canada with Stanley Rackham, Enid's reading of the cake raises the possibility that Nessie was an unwilling participant in the imperial venture.

That notion is imaginative, as are the other Nessie stories that I have just recounted. Yet by telling them here, I arrive at the point of my confession which is to admit that, at the outset at least, I wanted to see Nessie as different from the stereotypical pioneer woman that Thompson and Buss both describe. When I began my research, the image of the altruistic, selfless, and stoic woman who meets any challenge without complaint did not seem to be a liberating model of womanhood. At the end of my project, I find that I have accepted this model as one with more possibilities. Apart from that discovery, however, I also want to distance Nessie from the kinds of ethnocentric discourse that surfaces in many of the life narratives by Britannia colonists. What I have concluded thus far—as evidenced in the memoirs—is that Britannia women believed in the superiority of the British race as evidenced by their compliance with the Anglo-conformist model. While no one viewpoint can be said to represent the views of all persons in a group, it is likely that Nessie also held ethnocentric points of view. There are stories in my family that claim Nessie refused to associate with other settlers because

she believed them to be commoners. Indeed, her bias is said to have extended to some of her fellow-Britons as well as persons from other cultures.

This realization brought me to one of several uncomfortable points that occurred throughout the writing of this project. For me, I was challenged by whether or not to include mention of Britannia women's responses to non-British peoples, particularly when the discourse used by these women does not reflect favourably on them. As Jane Haggis remarks, "a core tenet of feminism—the historic and continuing subjugation of women by a dominant patriarchy—appears undermined, even dismissed, when attention is focused on other relations of power, such as class and race, which undercut the commonality of women's subordination" (46-47). Haggis also cites the work of Chilla Bulbeck in this regard: "Only in the last few years has the white woman found a voice in colonial histories...However, almost as soon as she spoke up, the white woman has been told to shut up again" (45). Britannia women clearly worked very hard in the midst of trying circumstances to create more favourable environments for themselves and to develop modes of self-representation that would enable them to express pride in their accomplishments. It has not been my intent to diminish those achievements. However, these women's commitment to Anglo-conformist beliefs, and the problems that this system produces, also demands attention in critical discussions about women and Empire.

There were other disappointments as well. As stated in the Introduction, one woman I had hoped to discuss in detail was Laura Sisley. In the course of my research, I devoted considerable time to searching for a life narrative written by Sisley. Unfortunately, my discoveries consisted primarily of a few church records kept by officials that did little more than confirm her attendance at the services.[47] If narratives by

Cecilia Wetton and others are credible, Sisley lives out her life without many financial resources or a home of her own. This story suggests one of the ways that imperialism fails women. Not only does Sisley exhaust her funds looking after the boys, but she is homeless and must live on limited finances. On the other hand, it is also possible to read Sisley as a kind of maternal feminist who finds a way to immigrate to Canada, where she earns a modest livelihood and retains her independence as a single woman. Sisley's relationship to imperialism is complex and, no doubt, a study of her life could reveal much about topics already touched upon in this project, including economic issues involving women, female sexuality, and marriage. Unfortunately, the Sisley story is inscribed in a way that provides a barrier to learning more about her life. Without any life writing narrated by Sisley herself, it is difficult to argue for an alternate interpretation of her life.

Indeed, it is difficult to argue for revised interpretations of these women's lives even when they leave us with their life narratives. A final moment that I found difficult to interpret occurs in relation to a short passage found in the memoir by the unknown author:

> On the 31st day of March 1903, our family was in a party of 2500 English men, women and children to set sail from England for Canada [on] the 'Lake Manitoba'....There was no first class but we had purchased second class so we women had at least part of a stateroom. ...It was my first sea-voyage so, naturally I was unable to leave my cabin, but one of my brothers told me something of the sights he saw on board. (1)

When the writer shifts from events witnessed by her to recount conditions aboard the *S.S. Lake Manitoba* through her brother's eyes, she seems to assume that the disarray witnessed by her brother would be of more interest to her reader than her own observations. A possible explanation for this tactic is that, perhaps, the author felt uncomfortable admitting that she had ventured outside ladies' quarters. Hammerton reports that "historians of shipboard practices note that the mobile 'total institution' during voyages reflected gender hierarchies and practices more generally" (Gender and Migration 164). The unknown author's reluctance to talk about sights she saw on board may well be grounded in values that deemed it as improper for a young woman to mingle on a ship. In response to stories about "licentious male crew or passengers [who] preyed on young women" strict surveillance became a standard aboard ships bound for imperial destinations (Hammerton 164). As Hammerton points out, women on imperial missions were not particularly satisfied with enforced confinement. "Women's incarceration was often met by defiance, with cross-dressing, the passing of notes to the men, [and] attempted fraternization....Transgressing of spatial boundaries was standard fare …and resistance was invariably interpreted as a function of the coarseness of inferior class status" (164). If the unknown author ventured into the men's domain on the ship, she might not have been willing to admit it for fear of damaging her reputation. One approach she might have taken to tell her story would have been to write it from a male perspective. Primary works in which Britannia women overtly admit a challenge to convention remain to be recovered. From the critical perspective, as well, discussions which raise the possibility that women participated in this kind of resistance remain outside the scope of usual discourse.

Admittedly, it feels strange to consider Britannia women in subversive contexts. As part of my own upbringing on a farm in Saskatchewan, I was taught to revere settler women for their selfless and resourceful contributions to home and family, as well as their domestic prowess. That I absorbed such images unconsciously from within a rural community where many descendants of settlers reside is not a surprise. Had I not grown up in a rural community, there still would have been ample exposure to the stereotypical settler woman in literature and other kinds of media. This point is argued by Thompson who writes that "the longevity of the pioneer woman as a character type…and her recurrent use as a metaphor for Canadian femininity indicates that the character appeals to some common perception of a woman's role in Canadian society" (3). While I do not necessarily agree that the character type continues always to appeal to us it is true that it is deeply ingrained as part of our culture. Thus I am vaguely uncomfortable arguing that Britannia women resist convention. This discomfort persists each time I contemplate the possibility of domestic violence in the settler home, the visceral aspects of childbirth, or a settler woman's desire to own her own property. I take my own discomfort as a sign that the women I write about may also have experienced uneasiness as they committed versions of themselves to paper. Moreover, one of my overarching concerns is that I might have interpreted my source material incorrectly. Indeed, the reserve that these women demonstrate in their writings styles has made it necessary to overread in a number of instances. Of course, I remind myself that the point is not so much to argue for a definitive truth about any one woman, or those women as a collective, but to raise new possibilities about how Britannia women lived and to ask questions about why they

express themselves in the ways that they do. Out of necessity, this goal requires the critic to be inventive and to push through discomfort.

In a letter to Marian Engel, Margaret Laurence writes, "What stuns me, looking at my own family, is how pitifully little I know about the women, even my grandmothers... and how much about the men. Lost histories...perhaps we must invent them in order to rediscover them" (63-64). Using critical theories to speculate about these documents in their historical contexts expands the range of possible meanings located within them, but does not demand a definitive conclusion. It does not mean, for example, that the unknown author was a cross-dresser while on the ship; however, by raising that possibility, we arrive at a broader and more inclusive story that represents a greater number of women and greater diversity within that group.

To find a diversity of voices remains a worthwhile goal of the researcher who studies Britannia women. In the narratives I discovered for this project, women wrote according to the patterns that they helped to establish and reinforce. The results are similar themes and a similar tone across the narratives which, although marking progress for women, do not represent voices that would have been in any way unconventional. Hence, the advantages gained and expressed by some would only have served those women willing to write traditional narratives that somehow idealize motherhood and the image of the selfless pioneer woman. In this regard, I continue to consider how my own great-grandmother's narrative may have been destroyed to silence her individuality. I cannot forget the missing narratives that need to be recovered—for surely those stories do exist—to broaden the understanding of Britannia women, and, indeed, settler women in general. In this project, I have attempted to perform imaginative kinds of analysis that

enable us to separate women from rhetorical frameworks that demand we understand settler women in one way. If this imaginative work is uncomfortable, the alternative is not positive. Miller writes that to under-read is "to retain the archetype and dismember…the subject of its history" (96). Hence I argue in favour of strategies that enable the researcher to focus on ways that women cope with rules and structures that oppress them, and how they restructure systems of constraint to articulate more forceful versions of themselves.

Figures [48]

Fig.1. Agnes (Nessie) Wheeler pictured, top far right, with her family. "The Wheelers. England, 1911?" Author's private collection. There were seven daughters in the family. Given the limited options for marriage and career felt by Englishwomen during that time, many of the Wheeler sisters did not remain in England. Enid Wheeler writes that Agnes's marriage to Stanley Rackham was the "beginning of the end for us all" (21). Her memoir is reflective of colonization's impact on women's lives, both in terms of the opportunities it afforded them and its demands: "Nessie went to Canada...and Kathleen...ended up in the U.S.A. Margie went to a hospital and started nurses training. Marie went with a missionary's family to Africa as a nurse..." (21).

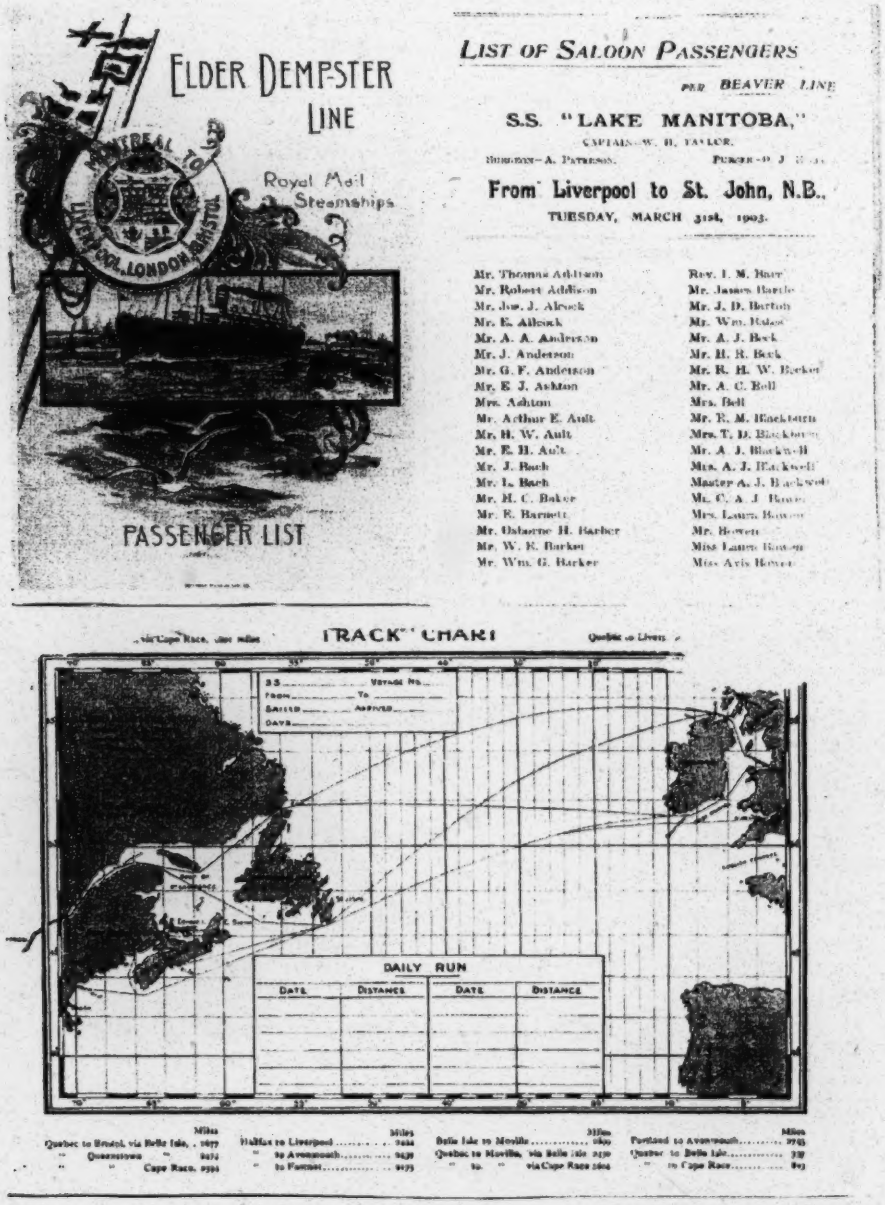


Fig.2 and 3. Passenger list saved in papers belonging to Stanley Rackham, *Elder Dempster Line Royal Mail Steamships Passenger List.* (London, 1903); Author's private collection. Several versions of the passenger list circulated to document those who traveled aboard the *S.S. Lake Manitoba.* This particular listing refers to the passengers who traveled in second-class, meaning that they paid additional fees to use a small and primitive cabin. "All but three hundred of the passengers were lodged in the steerage section of the ship" (Bowen 54).

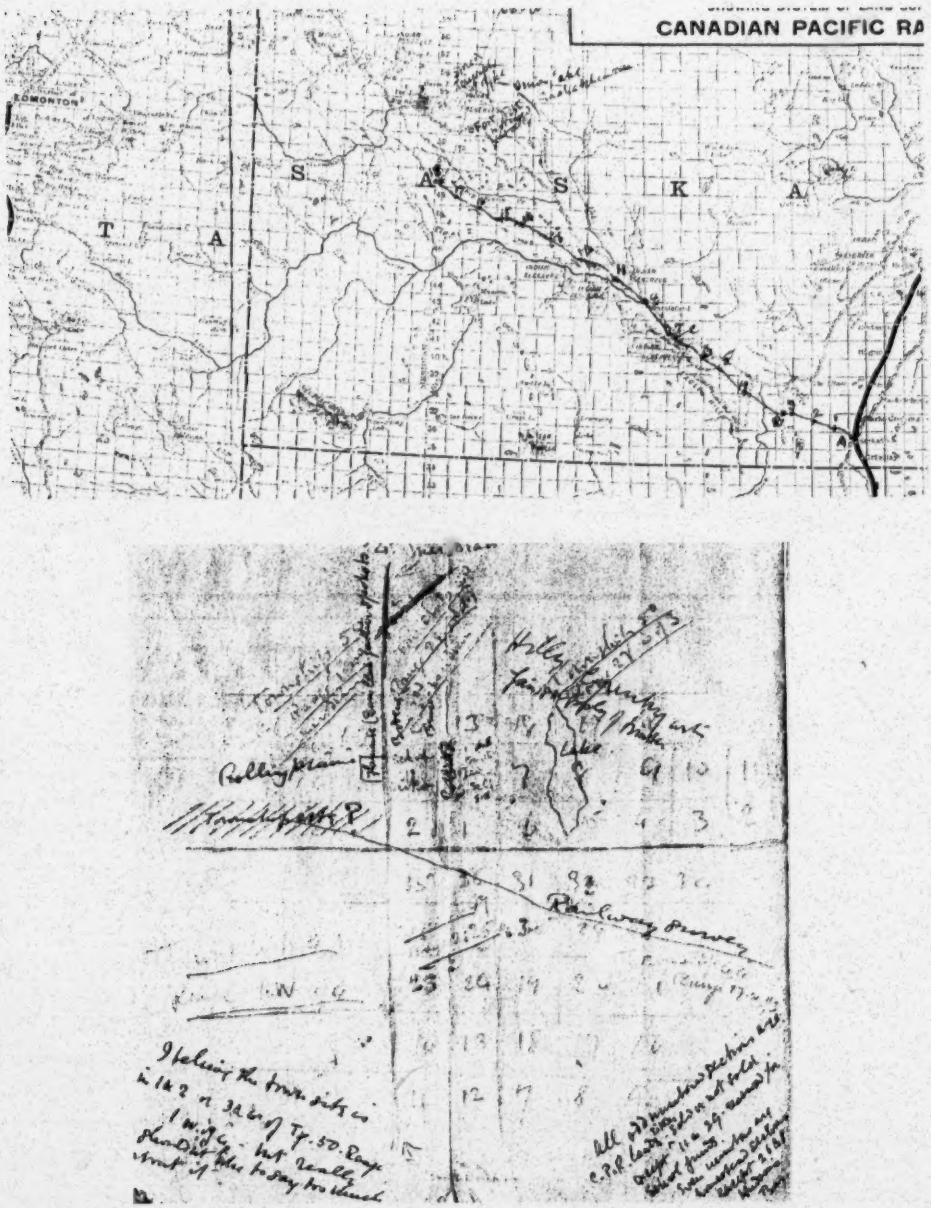
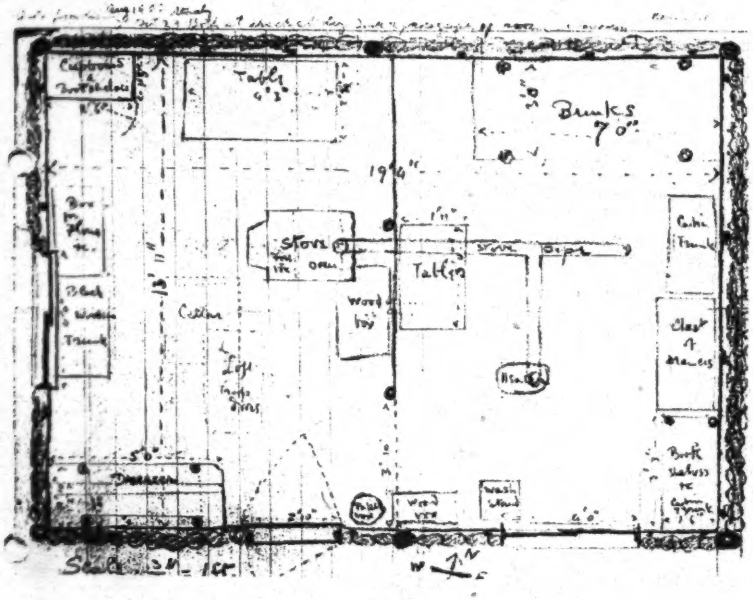


Fig.4 and 5. "Stanley Rackham's Map of Trip from Saskatoon to Lloydminster" (Saskatchewan, 1903); Author's private collection. Front and back views of the map used by Rackham who traced the points he traveled along the trek and made notes. Many of the colonists would settle along the trek route as well as at the homestead sites chosen by Barr.

Fig.6. "Early Photo of a Homestead Site" (1903); Author's private collection. A photograph taken by Stanley Rackham or Bernard Smith said to be of their homestead site. Upon their arrival at the homestead sites, many of the colonists would remain in tents for months to follow.

Fig.7. "Early Photo of the Rackham-Smith Homestead Site" (c.1903); Author's private collection. An early dwelling made with poplar logs. Many Britannia families lived in similar dwellings for substantial periods of time.



Plan of House - Built 1903

Height of ceiling from floor - about 7 ft. cellar - 7ft. x 5 ft.
" " ridge " ceiling " 4ft 6 in. Depth 5 ft.

Breadth 13 ft. 11 in. & 12 ft. 10 in. Length 19 ft. 4 in.

Material - Logs and mud - Lined with Lumber and Sawdust

Pole rafters - Lumber floor, ceiling and roof. Shingles

Cost of Lumber, shingles &c :-

		$	¢
800 feet	sheeting (1" boards planed 1 side) @ $22.50	18	00
309 "	Siding (8" boards planed 1 side) @ $27.50	8	55
450 "	sheeting @ $30.00	16	50
481 "	Siding @ $33.00	13	20
3 Rolls	building paper - 50¢ 2 rolls (80 sq ft. Tarpaper) 2.00	5	80
Lock 65¢	Chimney 1.00 2 pr Hinges 30¢ Tin 30¢ Door	2	35
2 pairs Sashes	4.00 Glass - 4 panes 50¢ Putty 10¢	4	80
3¼	Thousand shingles @ 5.00	16	25
5 lbs	Wire nails (2½" & 6") @ 6½¢ & 2 lbs @ 7½¢ (1½" x 2½")	4	35
		89	80
Deduct -	on hand - 100 ft. Lumber, some tarpaper, 400		
1	lot - " used for sheds, Tarpaper &c	4	00
1	65¢ worth nails for sheds		
		85	80

add cost of freighting from Fort Pitt - cost of logs (Estimated)
Shingling - mud Daubing &c &c

Fig. 8 and 9. "Plans for the Domestic Space" (c.1903); Author's private collection. House plans for an early dwelling on a Britannia homestead.

Fig.10. Photograph of Alice and William Rendell on their wedding day, *Our Wedding Day* (England, 1897); rpt. in *The Barr Colonists 1903: Based on the Journey of the Rendell Family* (Lloydminster: Rendell, 2003) 5. The photo is reprinted with the permission of Bud Rendell.

Fig. 11. Top Left. "Nessie's Wedding Cake" (London, 1912); Author's private collection.

Fig. 12. Top Right. "Nessie and Trixie with Nessie's daughter, Peggy" (Lloydminster, c.1916); Author's private collection.

Fig. 13. Bottom. "Nessie on Little Disc with Molly." (Lloydminster, c. 1914); Author's private collection. Multiple pictures of Nessie at work in the fields have been recovered.

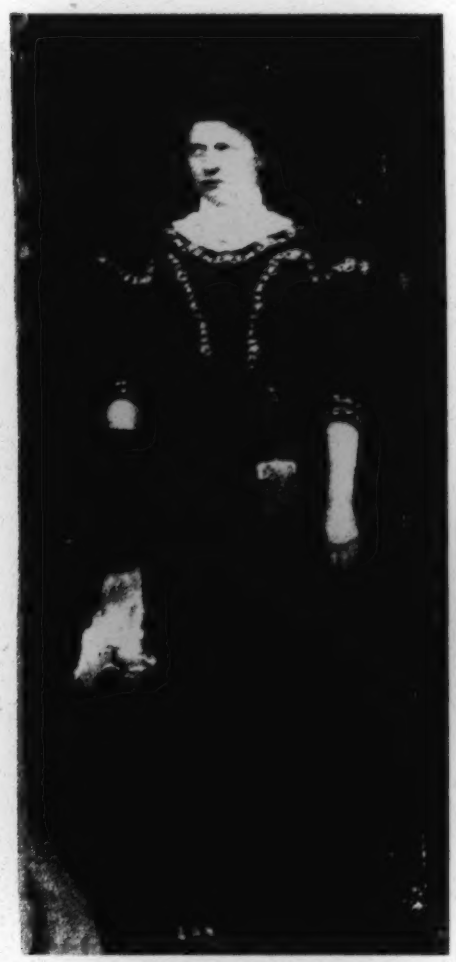


Fig. 14. Left. Elsie Nowell. (Marshall c.1912); Photos of Nowell are printed with permission of Nowell and Kent's daughter, Ivy Popow.

Fig. 15. Top Right. Elsie Nowell with husband, Fred Kent. (Marshall, n.d.); Despite the rigors that accompanied settlement life, photographs of Nowell, and of other Britannia women, almost always show them as elegantly dressed.

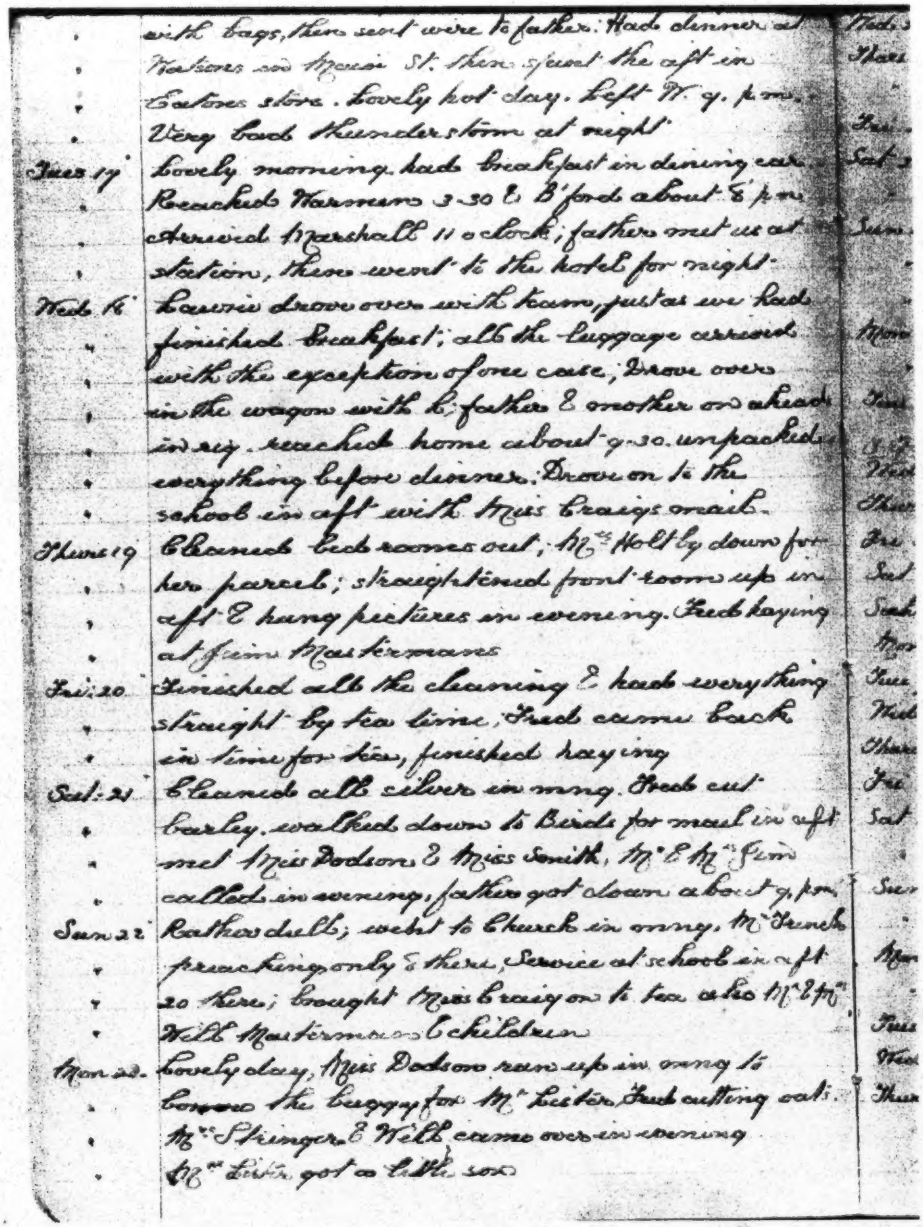


Fig.16. Elsie Nowell's diary. (1909); Private collection. A page from Nowell's meticulously kept diary.

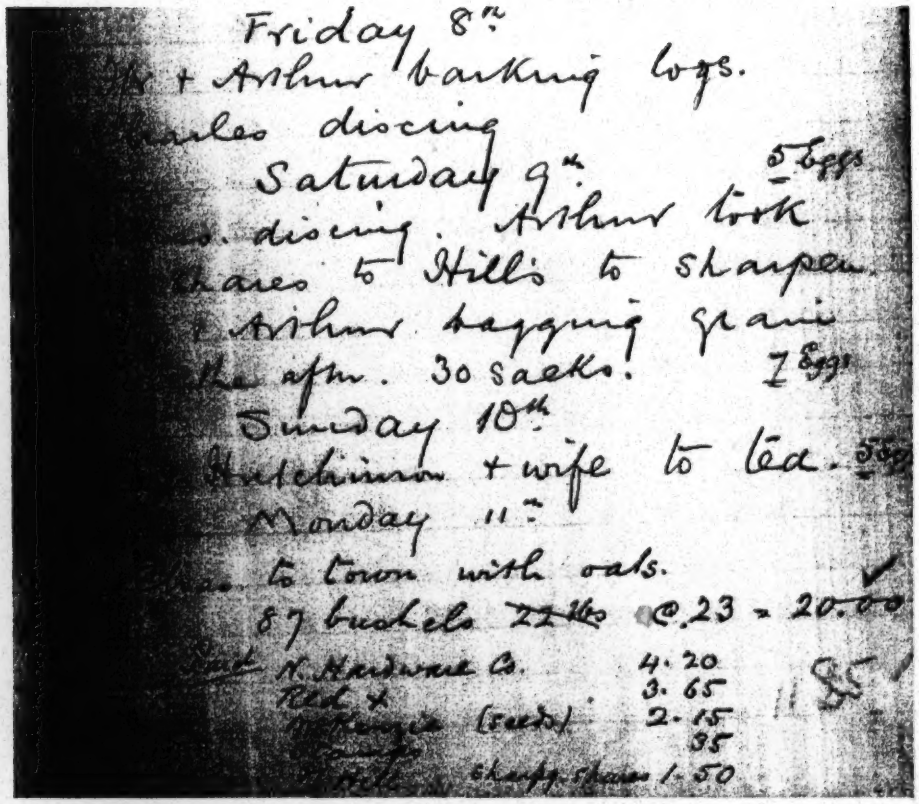


Fig.17. A page from the Jones diary, demonstrating her ledger style (1910). The Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, University of Alberta.

Fig.18. Left. Martha Topott is pictured with her son and other colonists outside the immigration office. (Lloydminster, 1903) The Barr Colony Heritage Cultural Centre/ # 181.

Fig.19. Right. Marion Lloyd is pictured holding an infant with Mr. Lloyd directly behind her. The identities of the remaining individuals in the photograph are unknown. (Lloydminster, n.d.) Glenbow Archives/ NA-4517-7.

Fig.20. Left. Photograph of Laura Sisley as shown in a church program, "A Beloved Parishioner: The Late Miss Laura Sisley...All Saint's Church." (Lashburn, n.d.) Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon/S-13497.

Fig.21. Right. Photograph of dedication to Laura Sisley located at All Saint's Church, "To the Glory of God and in Memory of Laura Sisley." Photograph by Rebecca Walker. (Lashburn, 2005). Sisley continues to have an important place in the Lashburn community. A baptismal font in acknowledgment of Sisley is displayed in the church, and a residential crescent retains the title, "Sisley Place." In particular, the baptismal font demonstrates the manner in which the pioneer woman is idealized as a maternal figure—an image that is rooted in imperialism.

Fig. 22. "Nessie and Bobby" (Lloydminster, c. 1919); Author's private collection.

Fig.23. "Four Generations" (Marshall, c. 1967); Author's private collection. Right to Left is Nessie next to daughter, Kathleen Chamberlain. Nessie's grand-daughter, Mary Rasmussen is pictured holding Nessie's great-granddaughter, Lucinda Rasmussen.

Endnotes

[1] Cecilia Wetton's *The Promised Land* includes the best known version of the Sisley story. This commemorative history was originally published in Lloydminster in 1953 to celebrate the colony's fiftieth anniversary and later republished in 1979. Wetton's account is comprised of a number of vignettes about people and events leading up to the establishment of the colony, including one about Laura Sisley. The first version of Wetton's publication has been cited in this project. The second edition is similar, although it rectifies a number of typographical errors. For example, in the first edition, Laura Sisley's biography is placed under the title "Early Days in the Colony." In the corrected version, this vignette is titled "Laura Sisley."

[2] Guy Lyle identifies the writer of this letter as the Lloyd's daughter. See Volume 56, The Barr Colony Collection, BPSC, at the University of Alberta. No date accompanies the archived newspaper clipping; however, it seems likely that it would have been composed in late 1940 sometime after the Reverend Lloyd's funeral which took place in December of that year.

[3] Stanley Rackham's exasperated analysis of Isaac Barr as expressed in his letter home dated May 25, 1903.

[4] In the opening chapter of *All Silent, All Damned,* Reid outlines the scope of her investigation into Barr's life: "I have written hundreds of letters, searched through public archives and private correspondence and actually followed Barr's trail back and forth across Canada and the United States" (4-5).

[5] The version of *The Trail of 1903* used in this project is one edited and republished by Franklin Foster in 2002. Also see an earlier facsimile of the manuscript in Volume 56, The Barr Colony Collection, BPSC, at the University of Alberta.

[6] At least two of Barr's pamphlets have the same title: *British Settlements in North Western Canada on Free Grant Lands: Canada for the British.* When citing Barr, I primarily use a pamphlet dated Christmas, 1902, unless otherwise indicated. Barr writes this pamphlet after his return from western Canada where he located a landsite for the colony.

[7] In *The Trail of 1903,* Lloyd writes he "had no intention of coming back to Canada" (3).

[8] In one such account, an unknown, presumably male, author provides a colourful depiction of events leading up to Barr's deposal. The unknown author describes a gathering at an encampment where he obtained signatures from fellow colonists in a petition to have Barr removed as leader: "After the meeting we immediately hit the trail, and in an hour or two's time, we heard some vehicle approaching at speed. It proved to be Mr. Barr, who was dashing along at top speed. Possibly he thought we might engage in a race; our driver however had too much respect for his team, & his passengers certainly had no desire for such madness. On and on Mr. Barr galloped his horses, until eventually he disappeared in the distance" (15-16). See The Barr Colony Collection, "Incidents…the Dethroning of Barr." A Collection of Materials Presented by Bjarne Tokerud, BPSC, at the University of Alberta.

[9] See Figure 5, page 137, which is a map that outlines the trek route on which a number of colonists settled.

[10] In 1961, D.H. Bocking performed a series of interviews with a number of men from the Britannia colony including Alf Willard, H.C. Messum, Joseph Hill, and George Hall. Taped copies of the interviews are available at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina. The interviewer guides the participants to discuss content which dwells specifically on the events involving Barr, with little attention paid to women.

[11] Title is from Martha Topott's interview with Helen Evans Reid. Topott, a member of Barr's primary party, describes what happens to her during the trek to the homestead site.

[12] Rendell uses the term "circular letter" to describe her epistles, thereby indicating that the letters are to be shared among several family members and friends in Britain. Over the course of many years, the letters have continued to circulate. The Rendell letters, including one by William Rendell, are published as part of The Canadian Historical Association's *Report of the Annual Meeting* held in the City of Ottawa, May 17-18, 1926. They were also printed in an edition of the *Alberta Historical Review,* 1963. Both of these publications are archived in Volume 71, The Barr Colony Collection, BPSC, at the University of Alberta. Copies are also available at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina. At the time of completing this thesis, the letters could be found on two internet sites: "Lloydminster.Net" at < http://www.lloydminster.net/Rendell.htm> and at "Celebrating Saskatchewan's Heritage" < http://www.lloydminster.net/Rendell.htm>. Finally, Bud Rendell has reprinted the letters private press: "The Barr Colonists 1903, Based on the Journey of the Rendell Family." The latter has been cited throughout this thesis; however, the citations have been compared for consistency with the 1926 and 1963 publications. Some variations do exist across the various published versions. No copies of the original letters could be located.

[13] Smith and Watson point out that "oral histories are a mediated form of personal narrative that depends on an interviewer who intervenes to collect and assemble a version of the stories" (*Reading Autobiography* 198).

[14] Biographical information about the Rendell family is found in the compilation by Bud Rendell, a descendant of Alice and William Rendell.

[15] The letter published in the February 27, 1904, edition of the *Devon Advertiser* appears in a slightly abbreviated format. There are extended versions of the same letter, which describes the colonists' first Christmas in Canada, found in Bud Rendell's compilation and the *Alberta Historical Review*. Additionally, see the Morton Manuscripts at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, MSS C550/1/29.1 no. 2.

[16] Barnes joined the Rendell family when they immigrated to Canada.

[17] Although she diminishes it somewhat, Reid does acknowledge Topott's complaint: "Mrs. Topott told me she lost her hospital ticket fee, and I am sure most of the three hundred or so who bought tickets did lose their five dollars. The idea was a good one...but medicare is expensive and the price of the tickets was unrealistic even for those days" (100).

[18] "Growing up on Gully Farm" appeared in the *Family Herald* in weekly instalments between June 23, 1960, and July 28, 1960. These short narratives are similar in content and tone to *Gully Farm* but focus on a slightly later point in time than the former work which deals primarily with the family's first year in Canada.

[19] Hiemstra's age is variously cited throughout sources. The passenger list of the *S.S. Lake Manitoba* states that Mary Jane Pinder is four at the time of the group's departure.

[20] Hiemstra changes the spelling of the name from *Topott* to *Topot*.

[21] It appears that Barr and Lloyd made efforts to supply both doctors and nurses at the outset of the journey, but that, at the last moment, the appointed physicians did not board the *S.S. Lake Manitoba*. Bowen explains the process that took place to acquire medical support: "[Barr's] first task was to replace the two English doctors who had failed to appear in Liverpool. From the ship, Lloyd had sent a cable to a minister he knew in Montreal, introducing Barr, stating their need for two doctors....Dr. Keating, a visiting physician at a small city hospital was prepared to join the colony if he could bring his new bride. Barr agreed. Keating then contacted Dr. Amos... [who also] agreed to join" the colony (76). The two physicians met up with party near Saskatoon; however, they could not possibly have been present to attend to the needs of all the colonists, particularly since those individuals were scattered at various points along the trek route. One of the immediate concerns that the physicians dealt with was an outbreak of scarlet fever, yet it appears that the physicians also had other duties that proved a distraction from their patients. Bowen reports that, as the colonists became increasingly frustrated, Barr provided Dr. Amos with "a revolver, and asked him to act as bodyguard" (136).

[22] Title from an entry in Elsie Nowell's diary dated August 20, 1909.

[23] Throughout this project, *diary* and *journal* are equivalent in accordance with Suzanne Bunkers and Cynthia Huff who cite Judy Simons in the introduction to *Inscribing the Daily*. Bunkers and Huff write that "the terms *diary* and *journal* are interchangeable" (13).

[24]Information about Elsie has been made available by her daughter, Ivy Popow, who provided the diaries and other supporting documents about her parents' lives.

[25] I have retained use of Elsie's maiden name, Nowell, since, at the time of composing the entries used in this particular study, she was unmarried. After Nowell marries in 1912, her diaries stop until 1916. From this point, she keeps a diary until 1926.

[26] On Monday January 24, 1910, the author writes that "Lawrence and Elsie Nowell and Fred Kent came to supper." On the same date, Elsie Nowell writes: "L. F. and I up at Jones for supper." April 16, 1911, Jones writes: "All to church and then to S. Nowell's for tea." April 16, 1911, Nowell writes: "Lovely day…had Jones' on to tea."

[27] Nathanial Jones was one of twelve men elected to lead the colony after Barr's deposal; indeed, it was Jones who made the motion that "the name 'Barr' no longer be applied to the British colony" (Bowen 138). Nathanial was a key player in all the events leading up to the removal of Barr. See Lynne Bowen 136-139. The *S.S. Lake Manitoba* listing shows that Frank and Arthur were members of Nathanial's family, probably sons.

[28] For example, on February 23, 1910: "The three boys went to the G.G. Meeting." "June 26, 1910: Father and Mother to Priest's in the evening."

[29] The passenger list for the *S.S. Lake Manitoba* is an imprecise document that bears a number of questionable entries. In the case of the Jones family, Nathanial's wife, Elizabeth, is listed as a passenger. At the last moment, Mrs. Jones opts not to come to Canada until the party is settled (see Bowen 42).

[30] Robyn Rogers Healey provides a biographical overview of Hill in *The Small Details of Life: 20 Diaries by Women in Canada 1830-1996.* Hill came to Canada with her husband in 1843.

[31] K. Jane Watt states that McInnis was born in 1878 and writes, "in its references to world events, both in the substance of the entries and in the materiality of the document

itself, McInnes's diary connects her home, her work, and her life in rural Langley to a vital international community focused on Canada's role in the British Empire" (220). See *The Small Details of Life: 20 Diaries by Women in Canada 1830-1996.*

[32] Lillian Tuttosi has written a short biography about Porter. See *The Small Details of Life: 20 Diaries by Women in Canada 1830-1996.* Porter "was born and raised in St Eleanors, Prince Edward Island, when that province was a colony of Britain" (239). The entries are composed during the time that the Porter family resided in Saskatchewan.

[33] While in England, on June 15, 1909, Nowell uses humour to describe her attempts to play a piano at the chapel. "Mr. Poll [?] tried his best to explain it all to me, but it was 'no go', tho' I did not let on." During the same visit to England, Nowell reads *The Sky Pilot,* by Ralph Connor, which she describes with enthusiasm: "it's great" (July 17, 1909). In Canada, on October 10, 1909, Nowell writes of an intimate moment with a friend: "Shared Miss Dodson's bed last night and had a good old talk." All of these examples are purged from, what appears to be, a recopied version of the diary.

[34] The first entry in Bellward's journals, commencing on September 24, 1903, is a long list of household furniture belonging to several woman. The exact purpose of the list is not known. The final page of Nowell's journal includes a list of mailing addresses. Nowell also includes a list titled "Memorandum for 1907" which includes significant information such as the dates of "seeding" and "firewooding."

[35] William Wymark Jacobs (1863-1943). It is interesting to note that Jones circulates a book by a popular "English short-story writer" (Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia 493).

[36] The title Mary Wilkinson gives to her memoir.

[37] The passenger list to *the S.S. Lake Manitoba* states that Kate Truscott was twenty-one years old in 1903.

[38] The passenger list of the *S.S. Lake Manitoba* lists Ethel Sanderson as age seven, although, in her memoir, Sanderson writes that she was "five years old in 1903." On the passenger list, Annie Sanderson, her mother, is listed as thirty-nine years old. Sanderson writes that her mother lived to ninety-three. These figures suggest a span of approximately sixty years between narrator and the events.

[39] Some speculation remains with regards to the date of this memoir. Wilkinson's memoir is not dated but she states at one point that she "happened to meet [a Canadian] forty-three years" [after 1903] (17). Lyle states in his bibliography that Wilkinson's memoirs were written "in the 30's and are not complete" (52).

[40] Lois Kent, the grand-daughter of Samuel Nowell, is the daughter of Elsie Nowell and Fred Kent. It has been determined elsewhere that the Joneses knew the Nowells.

[41] For her description of the prairie fire, see Rendell's letter dated October 21, 1903.

[42] Marion Lloyd's manuscript is held by the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, and appears unpublished. The memoir may, however, have been printed in local newspapers or community histories. The information found in Mrs. Lloyd's memoir appears to have informed the work of other researchers; for example, Cecilia Wetton and Lynne Bowen both tell stories about Mrs. Lloyd consistent with her memoir. A facsimile copy is in Volume 56, The Barr Colony Collection, BPSC, at the University of Alberta.

[43] Wetton writes that the child had scarlet fever.

[44] William Rendell, Stanley Rackham, and Bernard Smith all had prior experience with agriculture and all were successful as farmers.

[45] The pamphlet's title is *Free 160 Acres. Western Canada: Where and How and All About It. Information and Facts for the Prospective Settler.* This pamphlet was discovered among the papers that belonged to Stanley Rackham. The exact date of publication is unknown, but it appears to have been issued around the time of the establishment of the Britannia colony since it lists W.T.R. Preston as Sifton's representative in Great Britain. Barr initially approached W.T.R. Preston with his proposal to bring a party of Britons to western Canada. See Bowen, p. 9.

[46] This trait is also found in men's narratives. McCormick writes a particularly problematic account: "were it not for a paternal Government and the protection afforded them of 'reserves' and food supply, these simple people would never survive amidst the new civilization that is fast crowding them out—indeed these Indian peoples...will soon be a thing of the past" (*Lloydminster* 181).

[47] Minutes from the All Saints Anglican Church, housed at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon. See File SA-898 IV-309. Records indicate Sisley regularly attended services, and sometimes played the organ.

[48] Many of the photographs in this project belong to the Wheeler Rackham collection, privately held by myself and other descendants. The photos were annotated by Wheeler and Rackham's daughter, Kathleen Chamberlain in the early 1990's.

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